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THE DECORATED WORD

Qur’ans of the 17th to 19th centuries

by Manijeh Bayani, J.M. Rogers 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 four centuries or more, but most remain in the lands where they were produced. Despite prolonged efforts by Muslim governments in the Near and Middle East and beyond and of institutions such as the Manuscripts Commission of the League of Arab States, we have very little idea of their total number nor a complete list of where they are now located. This is so even in the case of Arabic manuscripts, the most extensively studied. A substantial proportion of them 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 some are magnificent specimens of the calligrapher's and the illuminator's art.

The largest and finest collections of Qur'ans are in the libraries of Istanbul, especially that of the Topkaps Palace, 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 National Museum in Tehran; in the National Library in Cairo; and in various libraries and museums in India. While circumstances have made the huge Topkaps collection very nearly comprehensive, the others are not only smaller but have a regional bias.

Over time the museums and libraries of Europe and North America have accumulated large numbers of Islamic manuscripts, and these have naturally 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 de France in Paris, the Vatican Library in Rome, the Nationalbibliothek in Vienna and the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. However, with the exception of this last, the acquisition of this material was never pursued as systematically as of literary, historical and scientific manuscripts. Even though the text of the Qur'ao is invariable, palaeographic, aesthetic or historical criteria could well have determined what entered these collections, but, with this one exception, no attempt was made to apply these 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 35 years ago under the auspices of the Khalili Family Trust. In this time specimens have been secured 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 and can now be used to illustrate the entire spectrum of Qur'anic manuscript development. Moreover, as the Collection now contains several examples from similar periods, comparisons can be made both within the period and between contemporary manuscripts from different areas. Many of the items in the Collection are of outstanding historical and aesthetic importance. They have been preserved 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. Together they constitute the most comprehensive survey of Qur'anic calligraphy and illumination yet undertaken. The first three volumes, which cover the period up to 1600, appeared in 1992 and 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 were so substantial that they could not be contained in a single volume, and the fourth volume was therefore divided into two parts. The first dealt with two categories of material. One was Qur'ans produced in the Islamic empires that controlled the Mediterranean, Iran and India; it included all the examples produced in Africa and North India after 1500, and the Iranian and Ottoman Qur'ans of the 17th and 18th centuries. These large sections were prefaced by a smaller group of manuscripts representing Qur'an production 'beyond the Islamic empires', containing material from China, from the coastlands of the Indian Ocean, and from sub-Saharan Africa. The present
mankind. Their individuals and most remain in the Near East but comprise the complete list of the most extensively or no other work. The majority of these are magnificent especially that of the Ottoman Quds-i Razavi, the National Library in Paris made the huge and one with a regional bias. The accumulated large Qur’an. The main library in London, Nationalbibliothek in Vienna, this last, the history, historical and graphic, aesthetic or but, with this one is what I began to form the Khalili Family part of the Islamic it covers and can and serves. Moreover, as editions can be made for areas. Many of the they have been of the existing discoveries. This after will have been to the other they constitute undertaken. The first new standard in the more general interest of the Qur’an manuscripts the fourth volume was issued. One was Qur’an’s India; it included all Persian and Ottoman containing material in Africa. The present volume, the second and final part, concentrates on 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. Manijeh Bayani, who has been a major contributor to the study of the Collection as a whole, took responsibility for drafting the Iranian section, while Tim Stanley, formerly the deputy curator of the Collection and now Senior Curator for the Middle East Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and an Ottomanist of distinction, has dealt with the Turkish material. Their contributions have been greatly enriched by the wealth of comparative material and the literary and biographical sources upon which they have drawn and by their recourse to the findings of recent codicological study of later Islamic manuscripts. J.M. Rogers, formerly of the British Museum and the first holder of the Nasser D. Khalili Chair of Islamic Art and Archaeology at the School of Oriental and African Studies and now honorary curator of the Collection, has enthusiastically coordinated their contributions.

The Qur’an manuscripts of this late period show a number of interesting original features. In addition to the traditional large-format volumes, which continued to be commissioned, both in Qajar Iran and Ottoman Turkey, they tend to favour small ‘pocket-format’ volumes for private devotions, often with elaborate marginal commentaries in ornamental medallions forming a visual, as well as a textual, contrast to the calligraphy and illumination of the Qur’anic text. The layout of both the latter and the marginal commentaries is often experimental and sometimes achieves the standardization of a printed book. And, in keeping with their function as family prayer books, they are used to record rites of passage or even oaths, as in the Qur’an’s of the Talpur Mirs of Sind. In Iran, moreover, they often bear indications of how they could be used to divine the future (fāl, istikhbarat). These features have rarely evoked comment and make the present volume a substantial contribution to the history of Qur’anic scholarship. The contributors have well maintained the standard set by François Déroche and David James in the first three volumes of the series, and I am grateful to them for their fine work.

Dr. Julian Raby, the general editor of the catalogues of the Khalili Collection of Islamic art, has played an important part in bringing this volume to completion, and my thanks are also due to Helen Loveday, for her technical analysis of the papers employed; to Christopher Phillips, for his photography; to Anikst Associates, who created the design; to Delia Gaze and Alison Effeny, the editors at Azimuth Editions; and to Lorna Raby, who supervised the production process. Sadly, however, two members of the Editorial Board, B.W. (‘Robby’) Robinson and Ralph Pinder-Wilson, have not survived to see the appearance of this second part of The Decorated Word. I lament the passing of two great scholars and gentlemen who were among my oldest friends.

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

Nasser D. Khalili KBE KCFO
London, 2009
The Qur'an in Qajar Iran

by Marijeh Bayani

In Iran the tradition of Qur'an production, which had barely survived the Afghan invasion of AH 1135 (AD 1722) and the subsequent internal unrest, took on a new impetus in the early 19th century, particularly under Fath'ali Shah, the most powerful of the Qajar rulers. The new establishment brought with it progress and development in all aspects of life, including the arts.

Royal patronage had always been a principal factor in artistic development. Nadir Shah (reg. AH 1148–60/AD 1756–67), for example, ordered translations into Persian of the Torah, the Bible, the Psalms of David (Zabur) and the Qur'an: none of the copies is dated, but their prefaces all record the fact that he commissioned them.1 The Bible translation is stated in the preface to have been made in Isfahan, and its stylistic similarity to the other three works suggests that all four were made there circa AD 1740.2

The architectural patronage of Karim Khan Zand (reg. AH 1164–70/AD 1751–79) is well known.3 An account of his building projects in Shiraz given in the Tārikh-i gīt gushā,4 however, makes no reference to any scribes, and their absence is borne out by the lack of inscriptions on his buildings. The only inscriptions on his famous mosque in Shiraz consist of a band of Qur'anic text in ʿubdīth above the porch and similar bands on the courtyard iwans, none of which is dated.5 Nor is any reference made in the tārikh-i gīt gushā to libraries in Shiraz or to manuscripts commissioned by Karim Khan. This, in addition to the absence of architectural inscriptions, suggests a lack of interest in the written word on his part, despite praises he earned in many other respects. Of the few scribes mentioned in the Rustam al-tavārikh, one was from Kerman and all the rest were from Isfahan,6 where Ismā'īl still lived (AH 1165–70/AD 1750–55) with the title of Shah and where the Safavid tradition evidently survived. We thus owe the survival of the Safavid tradition of Qur'an production to the patronage of local officials.

Occasional references in Qajar diaries demonstrate the continuing prestige of the Qur'an, and its role in popular religion. The author Mustawfi (1857–1913), for example, relates that his grandfather, Haji Mirza Aqa, read the Qur'an by means of its interlinear Persian translation.7 For the religious ceremonies of the month of Ramadan, which included the reading of the entire Qur'an, even the illiterate would buy copies of it and pay professionals to read to them.8 Mustawfi himself took a copy of the Qur'an with him on a mission to St Petersburg, and he used this particularly during certain months of the year.9 A copy of the Qur'an was also a traditional feature of the mabrūshah, a bride's dowry.

In his autobiography, which was first published in 1845, Mustawfi mentions that his father had the habit of commissioning copies of the Qur'an, and when the estate was divided up after his death each of his children received two superb copies. (There were six sons and five daughters, so he must have commissioned at least 22 copies.) Mustawfi relates his father's purpose in ordering these copies to a hadith of the Prophet reported by the Fifth Imam, which lists five categories of people whose good deeds will survive: those who build mosques; those who dig wells; those who plant trees; those who copy the Qur'an; and those who leave honest children behind them. Since his father had fulfilled the first three of these duties, the Qur'an manuscripts were no doubt commissioned to fulfill the fourth.10

Copies of the Qur'an were to be found in every household. The more affluent the patron, the richer the illumination and binding. Rulers, royal princes, high-ranking ʿulama and other officials, as well as merchants, were among the patrons of those manuscripts copied by known calligraphers and illuminators. The Khalili Collection includes specimens of most of these.

Agha Muhammad Khan (reg. AH 1193–1212/AD 1779–97), the founder of the Qajar dynasty, had spent almost 15 years of his life in Shiraz at the court of Karim Khan Zand.11 After his accession he continued the Zand tradition of religious patronage, particularly the restoration of Shi'i shrines,12 which he visited regularly on his progresses through the land.13 Manuscripts commissioned by him, however, appear to have been few. A Qur'an with the name of the patron erased, with parts of his father's name Hasan Khan visible,14 was copied in Isfahan between AH 1202 and 1208 (AD 1785–94), and may well have been commissioned by him. A Kulliyāt of Sādi that he commissioned for his nephew Baba Khan, the future Fath'ali Shah, in the year AH 1202 (AD 1788–89) was copied by the same scribe, 'Ali Asghar Hamadani,15 who wrote the interlinear translation of the Qur'an with the erased
The Qajar Shahs, patron's name. One other manuscript dedicated to him (though not commissioned by him) is an Arabic text on jurisprudence among the Twelver Shi'a, which is dated AH 1228 (AD 1813-1814). The establishment of a strong central government under Fath'ali Shah (reg. AH 1232–50/AD 1797–1814) brought new fashions in literature, manuscript production and painting, as well as a significant revival in Qajar production. His attention turned to ancient Iran, in particular to the sculpture of the Achaemenids and the Sassanians, in the fields of rock-reliefs, painting and portraiture. He encouraged Persian literature, and ordered Fath'ali Khan Saba, the poet laureate, to write a history of the Qajars on the model of Firdawsi’s Shahnamah. Fath'ali Shah was himself a poet, with the pen-name 'Khaghan', and he also practised calligraphy in nasta'liq. His lavish architectural patronage, and manuscript production during his reign, bear witness to his energetic patronage of religious art.

From his early years as crown prince, we are told, Fath'ali Shah bestowed favours of all kinds on na'ayids, learned men, distinguished people and the renowned shaykhs of Fars. In a petition to him, Mirza Muhammad Naqiri claims that through royal patronage artists who had been unemployed, and scribes whose various styles had diminished to dust (ghalay), had now become active again. The author, before his appointment as a secretary at court, being aware of the royal patronage, describes exactly how he studied various subjects, including the art of writing, in order to be included in the Shah’s favour; while in a panegyric to a newly appointed prime minister he alludes to calligraphers of artists arriving at his doorstep and prays that the arts continue to be fostered by him under the protection of the art-loving sovereign. According to an account of Fath'ali Shah’s achievements, possibly by Mirza Muhammad Naqiri, works of all sorts in Arabic, Turkish and Persian were commissioned. The Shah rewarded their authors generously with land-grants, salaries, robes of honour and pensions that amounted to 1000 to 2 crores and 200,000 tāmanah in cash (1 crore [kurush] = 100,000 tāmanah), and 400,000 kharshir in kind. Large sums were allocated for the commemorations of 'Ashura and other religious ceremonies, for repairs and extensions to various Shi'i shrines all over the country and abroad, and for the silver cornetaphs, gold chandeliers, and jewelled and enamelled gold doors made for them. New palaces and gardens were built, and many non-religious buildings were renovated. Fath'ali Shah’s knowledge of both literature and religious matters is also praised.

Fath’ali Shah’s example was zealously followed by princes, courtiers and public functionaries, who spent vast sums on similar commissions. Illuminated copies of the Qur’an were made all over the country, not only in the prosperous cities, but even in small towns and villages (see cat. 66). Manuchir Khan, Mumtazalm-Dawlah, Fath’ali Shah’s librarian, reported that no fewer than 3,600 manuscripts, in both verse and prose, as well as album pages by famous artists and calligraphers, had been inspected. Although no document of Fath’ali Shah has been recorded concerning edicts to scribes, Muhammad Shah’s firman to ‘Alamshah shows that he had previously been in receipt of allowances from the Shah. Under Fath’ali Shah’s patronage and that of members of the royal family, who were mostly governors of provinces or held important positions, as well as that of other high officials, fresh attention was given to manuscript production and to the restoration of old manuscripts. Princes, including Ahmad Mirza ‘Adud al-Dawlah, who wrote Tarikh-i ‘Adudi, Hanzra Mirza Hishmat al-Dawlah, Zill al-Sultan ‘Ali shah9 and Husayn Mirza Farmanfarra6 commissioned manuscripts. There were also daughters of Fath’ali Shah, such as Umm Salma, who copied a few Qur’ans herself, and Shah Baygum Ziya al-Sultanah, who was the Shah’s confidential secretary and composed and wrote letters for him, as well as other texts. She copied a Qur’an and endowed it to the tomb of Fath’ali Shah in Qum. The princess was also a patron, and commissioned manuscripts. She was such that in his colophon dated AH 1228 (AD 1813) Abd al-Wahhab Musawi says that by order of the king he wrote the marginal notes, and that it took him less than one day to complete the task.

The Ta’āddulah of Maltun (d. AH 1244/50 AD 1827–8), with its biographical notices of poets, praises many of them for their calligraphic skills in different styles. Specialists in nasta’liq, who would mainly have been copying Qur’ans and prayer books, included ‘Abd al-‘Ali, pen-named Kawlib b. Yazd,
who was unrivalled in naskh, but slow. Khalifat Muhammad, pen-named 'Aqiq of Sarab, worked miracles in ghubair, copying prayers and Qur'ans. When he wrote in nasta'liq, it was identical to Mir 'Imad al-Hasani's hand, and when in tubah, it was better than Mulla 'Ala Bayg. His main style, however, was naskh, which was pure, sturdy and in complete conformity to the rules. Periodically he would take a tāmār (scroll) of Turkish verses or a panegyric qastidab to Fath'ali Shah, and he returned to his native province well rewarded.

Another naskh scribe was Muhammad Safa'i of Isfahan. Another naskh scribe was Muhammad Shafi' Visal (the scribe of cat. 12) are mentioned as naskh scribes earning their living as copyists.

As mentioned earlier Fath'ali Shah's artistic patronage, through which the Qajar style was created, was also an inspiration for his family and officials, and became the pattern for the reign of his successor Muhammad Shah (cat. 130–64/AD 1834–48), though possibly to a lesser extent. Muhammad Shah is reported to have been a devout Muslim, respecting religious traditions, and to have written nasta'liq to perfection. He also ordered the translation and copying of The Thousand and One Nights, which was completed after his death at the order of Nasir al-Din Shah.

The Qajar court was a place of culture and learning. Under the patronage of the Qajar rulers, the arts and sciences flourished. Paintings, calligraphy, and poetry were highly valued. The Qajar court was a place of innovation and creativity, and it was during this period that many of the finest examples of Persian art were produced.

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states that, at the scribe's request, 'Ali Pasha had provided 144 folios of zirnab paper cut to the size of the Qur'an required, and fully lined, so that he could set to work immediately. The extra paper must have been to allow for mistakes, as well as for extra folios at the beginning, for prayers and lists of chapters, and at the end, for the colophon. Another document dated AH 1159 (AD 1843–4) gives detailed instructions for the illumination of two copies of the Masnavi by Akhund Mulla Majd Mudhabib and the purchase of shagreen (staghart) covers for them, and for another two manuscripts. The illuminator and the Qur'anic scribe were both akhbaris. This Persian title, of uncertain etymology, is a general term for a religious scholar. It first appears as an honorific in the Timurid period in the 15th century. During the Qajar period, it became much more widely used, frequently in combination with the nearly synonymous mudāla.21

Contemporary descriptions of political and social life during the long reign of Nasir al-Din Shah (AH 1263–1312/AD 1848–96) are confusing, partly because of their authors' bias and partly because of the political and social changes that took place in the course of his long reign. He was consistently interested in events in Europe, on which Pirzad al-Saltanah, his influential minister, daily informed him. Nasir al-Din Shah, who was a painter himself,22 was mainly interested in commissioning Persian texts and illustrated manuscripts, such as The Thousand and One Nights, some of which offered scope for Western influence. To Qur'an production, however, the West could not offer anything new, and Qajar scribes of all styles continued to take their models from the Safavid past. The naskh style had not changed since the time of Ahmad Nayarzi,23 and the best naskh scribes, such as Zayn al-'Abidin Isfahani ashraf al-kattab, Zayn al-'Abidin Qazvini muqtedar-nigah, Muhammad Isa'il Tawhid and 'Abd al-Ali Yazdi, were repeatedly compared to him. Similarly, the only models for nastaliq, shikastah and ta'liq were Mir 'Imad al-Hasani, 'Abd al-Majid and Khwajah Khayyam Munsfi respectively, and copyists of them even went as far as signing work with their names,24 which may explain why calligraphic pages bearing their names are so numerous, particularly Nayarzi's.

In the colophon of a copy of the Sahifah Sahidyyah, Sayyid Muhammad Baqa wrote: 'If a pen spreads sweetness like this, it is following the pen of Ustad [Ahmad] Nayarzi.25 Even so, few attained Nayarzi's mastery. One scribe to master his naskh—and the seven styles as well—was Muhammad Shafi Arsanjani, whose work is seen in cat.28.

The only innovative achievements of the Qajar period in the field of calligraphy are variations on shikastah, and in the field of decorative writing. The change in shikastah may have been caused by its use for writing official letters and documents, as well as Persian texts. If it were to be legible, it clearly had to be simplified, which resulted in shikastah styles known as the Qur'an Mafqāt style and the Amir Nizam style, the latter being more simplified than the former.26 Innovation in decorative writing is seen in the work of scribes such as Hasan Zarrin Qalam,27 Malik Muhammad,28 Mushtaq Qalam29 and Muhammad 'Ali.30 A few were influenced by Ottoman models,31 especially in the case of Mushtaq Qalam, whose decorative work dates from the time he spent in the Ottoman empire in the late 19th and early 20th century.

In contrast, by Nasir al-Din Shah's time mosque building and the restoration of shrines were increasingly the initiative of clerics and merchants. The numerous buildings that Zill al-Sultan erected during his governorate of Isfahan did not include a single religious foundation. The clergy were also in control of Qur'an production, as may be seen in cat.3, 5, 31 and 71.32

Nasir al-Din Shah's patronage of Persian literature was reflected in the creation of two government offices—the dar al-ta'if wa'l-insiba'il ('bureau of publishing') and the dar al-tajarunah ('bureau of translation').33 The Shah paid 1,000 tāmirūs from the royal purse towards translations into Persian, and Pirzad al-Saltanah records that he presented more than 1,000 books and pamphlets, most of them translations and some of them illustrated and illuminated in the majma' al-sanā'ī ('college of arts').34 He makes no mention of Qur'ans, other than in connection with istikhbāt (divination). These innovations did not preclude a deep interest in religious matters: Nasir al-Din Shah's devout performance of the daily prayers was much admired.35 He appointed a teacher, Shaykh Asadullah, to teach the Qur'an
The Qur'an in Qajar Iran

to the ladies of the court and also built the takitiyeh-yi davlat for the 'Ashura passion plays. The appearance of his seal impression on Qur'ans and religious texts in the Gulistan Palace Library is, however, less an indication that he used them than a mark of his ownership of fine manuscripts bearing the signatures, whether genuine or suspect, of master scribes such as Ahmad Nayarzi and Yaqut al-Mustas'imi. The only two Qur'ans commissioned by him each show a break with tradition. One was the completion in AH 1268 (AD 1851–2) of a copy in nasta'liq by Asadullah Shirazi that had been commissioned by Muhammad Shah; the other, dated AH 1307 (AD 1889–90), is by a female calligrapher called Khurshid Kalah. 87

As A.K.S. Lambton has observed, relations between the clergy and Agha Muhammad Khan and Fath'ali Shah were good. They both treated the 'ulama' with respect, and sought to secure their support, so much so that the fuqaha' who claimed to be nāšib-i 'amm of the Iman gave Fath'ali Shah the title nāšib-i khāṣ. 88 The situation changed, however, in the reigns of his successors. Muhammad Shah and his minister Haji Mirza Aghasi being Sufis were less attentive to the orthodox clergy and reacted harshly to murmuring against the central government, the power of which further increased at the expense of the 'ulama' under the Westernizing policy of Nasir al-Din Shah and his minister Mirza Taqi Khan. 89 There then seems to have been a tacit distinction between those arts where foreign elements were accepted and those where they were not. Under the latter were all categories of religious texts, which were particularly zealously gaarded by the clergy.

The change in the relationship between rulers and clergy is also noticeable in the commissioning of Qur'ans by Qajar rulers. So far the recorded commissioned Qur'ans by Fath'ali Shah are six with at least another three for illumination. 90 Subsequently, in AH 1259 (AD 1843–4), Muhammad Shah commissioned a Qur'an for the tomb of Abbas Mirza. 91 Two Qur'ans, as noted above, were commissioned by Nasir al-Din Shah. 92 None was commissioned by Muizzafar al-Din Shah (reg. AH 1312–14/AD 1896–1907).

Interest in religious works is also worth a mention. Fath'ali Shah ordered at least six texts to be copied. 93 The only religious text that Muhammad Shah commissioned was the Miftah al-khāṣā'īn, on the use of the Qur'anic verses for divination, copied in nasta'liq. 94 Nasir al-Din Shah ordered a nasta'liq copy of the Bihisht-i shebat in AH 1280 (AD 1863–4) 95 and a nasta'liq Persian translation of the Qur'an by Muhammad Housayn Shirazi kābi-i adabīn in AH 1292 (AD 1875–6). 96 The only religious manuscript commissioned by Prince Muizzafar al-Din was a book of prayers copied in nasta'liq and shikastah by the scribe Muhammad Riza in AH 1309 (AD 1892–3). 97 Prayer books were offered to the Qajars as gifts with increasing frequency in the later years of Nasir al-Din Shah's reign, and during the reign of Muizzafar al-Din Shah. None of the scribes who presented either Qur'ans or prayer books to either monarch signs himself, however, as al-da'i li-ubūd al-dawlab al-tāhirah, hence none of them was a royal pensioner. 98

Nasir al-Din Shah's preference for secular literature is shown by his purchases of three copies of the Qur'an 99 and nine Persian texts, four of which were of Sādi. 100 The Shah also purchased many other works from aristocratic families with major libraries, including Tahmasp Mirza and Mu'ayyid al-Dawlah. 101

Another factor in the general decline of the manuscript production was the establishment of a printing house by Manuchehr Khan, Mu'tamid al-Dawlah in AH 1246 (AD 1829–30), known as the Chā'ī-Mu'tamidī. By Nasir al-Din Shah's reign, it was printing up to 800,000 books a year, including the Qur'an and a great variety of religious works, making them more widely available. 102 The resultant decrease in demand for hand-written books was a serious blow to the naskh scribes, who were generally clergy and whose social status at the time was somewhat inferior to other professions.

The restoration of old copies of the Qur'an may also be an indication that royal patrons were more appreciative of the finely copied and illuminated Qur'ans of past masters. Nasir al-Din Shah's preference for restoring Qur'ans and religious works, rather than commissioning new ones, may also have been an attempt to circumvent the clergy's traditional role as scribes and correctors, further reducing their power and prestige.

5
Descriptions of the hierarchy of amāf (guilds) and the royal workshops show that there was no official guild of scribes. The title ḫadiḥ, which is often used for the head of amāf, is not usually applied to scribes. The title ḫuṣuṣ-nasl ḥadiḥ is given to two nastaʿlq calligraphers, Husayn and Muhammad ʿAli Tabrizi. Husayn was the teacher of Prince Muzaffar al-Din, but it is unclear why Muhammad ʿAli was granted the title—unless, following Mustawfi, we conclude that by this time such titles had lost their meaning. Another scribe with this title was Abu’l-Qasim, the chief scribe at the Holy Shrine in Mashhad in the late 14th century, understandably, since he would have been in charge of other scribes in the Shrine workshop, working in association with painters, illuminators, stone-carvers, wood-carvers and tile-designers.

Naskh was used almost entirely for Arabic texts. The only Persian text that was occasionally copied in naskh is the Ma’mar of Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi, which demanded a high degree of literacy in Arabic. Nastaʿlq, on the other hand, was for writing Persian and required a knowledge of Persian poetry and literature. The nastaʿlq scribes included esteemed calligraphers and ‘men of the pen’, poets, historians and the like. The two groups were so distinct that the interlinear Persian translations of Qajar Qūr’āns had mostly to be written by a different scribe from the one responsible for the main text.

A complete, correctly copied and vocalized Qūr’ān was no task for anyone unfamiliar with Arabic, the language of the Qur’ān, and hence was the speciality of theologians and the clergy. This is evident from the titles of naskh scribes, and often their fathers as well. A few examples must suffice. Zayn al-ʿAbidin Mahallati, the scribe of c. 29 and 30, signs himself as ʿaql-ʿi abnāʾ al-ʿulamāʾ and was a mulla. Muhammad al-Tili, the scribe of c. 2, was a tālalūb (student of theology). ʿAli ʿAskar Arsanjani, the scribe of c. 14, and his son Muhammad Shafi, the scribe of c. 28, are both called mulla by Fursat al-Dawlah Shirazi. ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAshur, the scribe of c. 19, signs himself in one colophon as ʿAbdullah ibn Mulla ʿAshur. And the scribe of two religious manuscripts in the Gulistan Palace Library signed himself as aql al-ʿadīd wa al-ʿulamaʾ Maḥrnīd al-mulaqqab bi-sultaṇ al-qurraʾ ("The least of the sasyids and theologians Mahmud titled ‘Sultan of readers’ [of the Qur’ān]).

Occasionally, scribes would write both the main text and the interlinear translations. In Visal’s case, we know that he wrote in all styles. Although he began his career as a naskh scribe, his prestige at the royal court was most probably a reflection of his status as a poet, a Sufi and a writer of nastaʿlq. The firmans of Muhammad Shah to the family of Visal are the only documents published in which a calligrapher’s salary is specified. We have the testimony of Visal’s son that he earned his living by copying the Qur’ān, which he had learnt from his maternal uncle who was also a Qur’ān copyist. His only royal commission was a copy of the Ma’mar of Jalal al-Din Rumi. Only one of his sons, however, Muhammad ʿImāl Tawhīdī, was a naskh scribe, which shows that the allowance granted to Visal’s sons was not specifically for copying the Qur’ān, nor is there any record of a Qur’ān commissioned from any of the Visal family. Ahmad Vaqār, like his father, wrote in all styles.

Most of the Qajar scribes who held the position of ‘royal scribes’ (kāṭīb al-sulṭān or al-ḵāʾ kāṭīb al-sulṭānī) or signed themselves as such were writers of nastaʿlq. Royal scribes under Muhammad Shah were somewhat less numerous than under Fathʿali Shah, and there were even fewer under Nasir al-Din Shah. Fathʿali Shah was the only Qajar ruler to give the title kāṭīb al-sulṭānī to a naskh scribe, Muhammad ʿAli Khwansari (r. AH 1218-49/AD 1802-34). An undated firman addresses him as a royal scribe and orders that favours should be bestowed upon him as he wishes. This shows that during Fathʿali Shah’s reign all scribes were ranked similarly, and a royal scribe could be either a naskh or a nastaʿlq scribe. The situation changed under subsequent rulers, when the royal scribe was always a nastaʿlq scribe. Although naskh scribes were not given the title of royal scribe, they were honoured with titles such as sulṭān al-kuttah, sadr al-kuttah or asbrof al-kuttah.

Imām al-Salṭanah includes a list of scribes in his al-Maʾāṯār. Those who wrote naskh were Muhammad Baqāʾ asbrof al-kuttah; ʿAli Riza Partu; Muhammad ʿAli Isfahani sulṭān al-kuttah; Muhammad Baqir sadr al-kuttah; Zayn al-ʿAbidin Isfahani asbrof al-kuttah; Ghulamʿali Isfahani; Muhammad Hashim
that there was no degree of literacy in the society of the Persians. Poets, historians and even the scribes of the Holy Shrine of the Imam were all in charge of other trades, such as weaving, stone-carving, or occasionally copied the Persian poetry. They were called the "hāzirān". These titles are also used to describe clerics who copied the Qur'an in the early Qajar period.

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Zargar Isfahani, and Ahmad Vaqar, a Qur'an copyist who is mentioned in al-Ma'āthir is Mirza Muhammad Riza ibn Mirza Muhammad Mahdi, who was Shirazi by origin, resident in Isfahan, and who studied qāfā and waṣīl. He wrote fine naskh and was considered a master, and had already produced nearly 400 copies of the Qur'an by the time that al-Ma'āthir was compiled. His son, Mirza Abul-Qasim, followed his father in rapidity, and good writing. He was the naskh scribe listed by Imad al-Saḥānī, who gave a detailed account of his work with writing tools by Nasir al-Din Shah to copy a Qur'an, though even here it is not said that the king commissioned it.

The clerical control of Qur'an production meant that, unlike Ottoman illumination of the time, Qajar illumination, though lavish, remained outside European influence. Russian and European motifs were not found in the decoration of lacquer-painted book-covers, but did not occur in Qur'ans in the West. The absence of Western elements in Qur'an illumination must mean that the guild of illuminators included clerics or that the illuminators were working under the supervision of the clergy, as appears from documents of the Muhammad Shah period.

In short, after the fall of the Safavids, the art of Qur'an production owed its survival to local patronage, and its revival to Fath'Allah Shah. His patronage covered almost every form of art and scholarship. Relations between the court and the clergy were at their best during his reign. Under his successors a gradual reduction of the power of clergy is noticeable, as is the growth of clerical opposition to change and the monarchy. One result of this was the absence of patronage for those Qur'an copyists who were clerics; another was the constitution of a new class of scholars.

Characteristics of Qajar Qur'ans

The Qur'ans published here illustrate the development of the book as a precious object in late 18th- and 19th-century Iran. The main centres of production changed during the Qajar period. Under Fath'Allah Shah and in the early years of Muhammad Shah's reign, Qur'ans of high quality were produced in many centres, such as Tabriz, the seat of the crown prince (cat. 2). Isfahan (cat. 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 67) and Shiraz (cat. 2, 12, 14 and 15), as well as other smaller places. Under Nasir al-Din Shah, the main centres were Isfahan (cat. 10, 60 and 69) and Shiraz (cat. 19, 22, 24, 27 and 28). From Ruzbihan in the mid-16th century through Ahmad Nāyrizi to Visal and Muhammad Shafi' Arsanjani up to the fall of the Qajars in 1925 (AD 1925), Shiraz maintained its tradition as a centre of manuscript production, producing Qur'ans for use at home and abroad.

Shiraz was also the centre for lacquer artists, such as Lutf'Alī Shirazi, and the location of a particular school or workshop that produced the illumination for manuscripts of high quality, such as those commissioned by officials, such as Abu'l Hasan Khan, Mushir al-Mulk, and copied by master scribes, such as Muhammad Shafi' Arsanjani (cat. 28). This workshop is distinguished by the use of arabesque scrolls, different shades of gold and white, green and lapis-blue, as seen on cat. 22 and 28. Unfortunately, no mention is made of those who worked in any of the illumination workshops.

The styles of writing used in 19th-century Persian copies of the Qur'an are naskh for marginal notes and colophons; nasta'liq for interlinear Persian translations; and shakastāb or nasta'liq for marginal commentaries or Shi'i traditions, although occasionally one finds these in Persian naskh, as in cat. 5, 32 and 67. Scribal signatures of the interlinear Persian translation may be added at the end of the text or at the end of the marginal notes (cat. 12, 22, 24 and 66), usually in the same style in which they are written.

Out of the variety of verse markers used prior to the 19th century, only one type survived and that was the multi-petalled rosette, often simplified into a roundel with radii and dots. Verse markers are particularly ornamental in large copies of the Qur'an (cat. 28), while in very small Qur'ans they may appear just as a dot or a small gold disc.

Text divisions in 19th-century Persian copies are limited to juz', nisf and bizb. These are always written in nasta'liq within illuminated devices. The shape of these ornamental cervices usually changes
according to the division marker. They are often richly illuminated with gold and polychrome and have fine finials above and below. If a similar shape is used for different divisions, then the colours change to distinguish them. The main colours for the illuminated devices marking the text divisions are red and lapis-blue. The titles and text divisions are usually written over a coloured or gold ground (cat.9); it is rare for the words and decorations to be traced in ink first and then coloured in (cat.11).

The text frames (jaddal) are usually made up of different colours: gold, red, green, turquoise-blue, lapis-blue and black. The black is just a line, which is often used for border markings. Gold and red are often in the form of narrow bands. The outer rules (kamand) are made with a gold rule bordered with fine black, and occasionally with an extra red rule.

Most of the marginal texts pertain to the virtues of reciting each chapter according to Shi'i sources; they appear at the beginning of the chapters, and are always written in Persian. Occasionally, commentaries on the surahs are given (for example, cat.11 and 13).

While copies of the Qur'an of normal size often have reading instructions, these are frequently omitted in small Qur'ans, partly because of space considerations and partly because very small copies were often carried for their talismanic and protective qualities. The smallest Qur'an in the Khalili Collection to contain reading instructions is cat.8, which is in jā namāzī size. The term indicates that it was used at prayer time and was intended to be read. It is copied clearly and in a large hand.

The change in format between the early Islamic period and the early 20th century is interesting. The 30-njā' tradition of the early period changes to one volume of many folios, although there are a few Qur'ans copied in two volumes or even in five. By the 20th century, the entire Qur'an appears copied on 30 folios, not to mention the small scrolls used for talismanic purposes (see pp.274–80). At the same time the talismanic value of the Qur'an is shown by those miniature Qur'ans that up to the 18th century were mainly copied on paper cut in an octagonal shape. In the 19th century rectangular copies become popular, as seen in examples in the Khalili Collection. The Persian copies of the Qur'an in the Khalili Collection range in size from 6.6 by 4 centimetres (cat.68) to 30.5 by 31.5 centimetres (cat.28).

Unlike Qur'ans of the early Islamic period which contain only text, and those of the medieval period which sometimes contain reading instructions in the margins52 and end with a short prayer and the colophon, later Qur'ans include additional texts, such as an index of the chapters of the Qur'an, always copied at the beginning; prayers to be read before commencing the Qur'an; interlineal Persian translations; traditions concerning each chapter, according to different sources, written in the margins next to the beginning of the chapter; various prayers to be read when concluding the Qur'an; and instructions on how to use the Qur'an for divination, usually at the end, unless added later. The istikhārah indications are mostly placed at the top right-hand corner of the 'b' folios, and are the most common feature of Qur'ans of the second half of the 19th century (see pp.92–5).

The colophons of the main text are usually easily distinguishable by their style, which differs from that of the text. Their length and the space in which they are written varies, from simple ones just added to the end of the text (cat.25), to many lines following it (cat.4, 14, 19, 20, 36, 27, 29, 30 and 70) or set in a panel at the end (cat.18). In some cases, the colophon runs over a page (cat.13 and 28), but the text is always fitted into the width of the text area, with no extra arrangements. In some Qur'ans, however, a specific area is allocated for the colophon. These can be in oblong panels (cat.25), in decorative lobed shapes (cat.3 and 67) or in shapes gradually narrowing from the outer rule (cat.6 and 10). Colophons are also written to either side of an illuminated panel (cat.1) or written in lines of different length, creating irregular shapes without outlining (cat.31). Apart from those colophons that run over two pages because of their length, there are occasional examples of the colophon being divided and written at the bottom of two pages. These can be in simple form (cat.32) or in gold cartouches (cat.24). The variety of ways in which the colophon is given indicates that the scribe had some scope for initiative. This is also apparent in the content of the colophons.
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Colophons usually include various terms for copying. The most common term is *katabahu* ('wrote it'), and other derivations from the same root, such as *katibahu* ('its scribe ...'), *katib* ('the scribe ...') and *ishtak* ('asked to be copied', as in cat.1). Another common term is *tahriir* or *barranah*, with the same meaning of 'writing'. Occasionally, other terms, such as *tarwud* and *sanmiq*, are used. These two have opposite meanings: *tarwud* is a depreciatory term, putting the work on the level of a draft, or a scribble (literally, 'blackening'), while *sanmiq* exalts the writing to an embellishment, or suggests it is particularly elegant. A few colophons merely indicate the completion of the Qur'an, in either Arabic or Persian.

If a copy of the Qur'an is commissioned, the name of the patron, his titles, his father's name and his attributes are given. To state that the Qur'an was commissioned, the scribes use phrases in Arabic, Persian or Persianized Arabic, such as *bar bash-i farrnasib-i* (cat.26) and *bi-bash al-anvar* (cat.2), both meaning 'by the order of'. However, when the phrases *bash al-khutub* ('by the request of') or *bi'l-ismah* ('by the hint of', in cat.15 and 28) are used, this may indicate that the Qur'an was copied as a favour. The patrons of the 19th-century Persian Qur'ans in the Khalili Collection include rulers – Mir Karam Ali Khan Talpur (cat.11 and 12) and Murad Ali Khan Talpur (cat.10) – and high officials: Husayn Quli Khan, Bayqar Bayy of the Afshar tribe (cat.2), Manuchir Khan, Mustamid al-Dawlah (cat.13), Tahya Khan, Mushir al-Dawlah (cat.19), Nasirullah Khan, Itimad al-Dawlah (cat.24), Mirza Qalamzani...
(cat.26), Mirza Muhammad Rizvi Mustawfi (cat.27), Abu'l Hasan Khan, Mushin al-Mulk (cat.28), 'Ali Asghar Khan, Amina al-Sultan (cat.29) and Habibullah Khan, Mushir al-Mulk (cat.30). There are also religious dignitaries: Muhammad Baqir (cat.3), Akhund Mulla Mubin (cat.3), Mir Muhammad Mahdi (cat.3) and Mirza Zayn al-'Abidin (cat.31), both Imams Jama'ah of Tehran. There are others who have not been fully identified, but whose titles suggest that they might be Sufi Muhammad Ismail Khan Jami (cat.4), Muhammad Naini, known as Aqa Baba (cat.20), and many other unidentified patrons.

The colophon then gives the name of the scribe, the name he is known by (cat.32), his title (cat.32), pen-name (cat.22 and 32) and often his father's name. The tradition of mentioning the father's name before that of the scribe appears in 17th-century Iran. It usually occurs when the father is more important or more respected than the son. This tradition is also found in later Qur'an, and seems to have been used if the father had died recently, in which case the word 'deceased' is sometimes included (cat.4 and 24), or if the father was a well-known person (cat.15, 29 and 30). The longest genealogy for a scribe is found in cat.18. In this case the otherwise unrecorded scribe gives not only his father's and his grandfather's names, but also includes that of his great-grandfather, in order to show that he was the great-grandson of the renowned Mirza Ahmad Nayrizi.

The most common practice is for scribes to describe themselves as al-mudhib ('sinful'), al-faqir or al-haqir ('humble'), 'abd Allah ('servant of God') or more often just al-'abd ('the servant of God'). Other terms are: al-muhtaj li-rahmah ('in need of the forgiveness of ... [God] ...'). In many cases, the chosen phrase before the scribe's name rhymes with it, such as al-muhtaj ila rabbibi al-qaufat 'Abdullah ibn 'Askar (cat.10). This practice of rhyming an appropriate phrase with one's name was
already common on medieval Islamic seals, and continued in use up to the 20th century. The scribes of Persian literary texts use different terms in their colophons.

The place in which the Qur'an was copied and the date follow next. If the place is a large town or city, it is sometimes given with its attribute, such as dar al-amān Qurān (cat.39). Occasionally, the colophon notes how many other Qur'ans the scribe has copied, such as 'this is the 25th Qurān [I have copied]', 'This is my 160th Qurān' or 'This is the 87th Qurān'. One Qurān differs completely in the sequence of information (cat.15). It starts by saying that it is the scribe's 33rd copy of the Qurān, followed by his father's name, then his own, followed by the date, which is given in a most complicated form, followed by the name of the patron.

In some cases, although it is stated that the copy was ordered, no clear indication is given as to whether it was copied, illuminated or bought. Qur'ans of this kind belong to the category of those that were acquired or purchased after they had been completed. Cat.12, copied by Visal, belongs to this group. It contains three colophons, two belonging to the main text and the Persian translation, dated AH 1239 (AD 1824), and one dated AH 1240 (AD 1824–5). The latter includes the name of Mir Karamāli Khan Talpur, and the phrase bi-r-iḥāṣat-i ('for').

The scribes occasionally include extra information in the colophon. For example, the scribe of cat.13, Fath alī, mentions that it was one of the many copies of the Qurān and manuscripts commissioned by Ḥajj Muhammad 'Ali Hamāsi Tahrānī, who was in the service of the Imam Jumā'ah of Tehran. A late Safavid Qurān contains a Qajar colophon that notes that it was bought by Husayn al-Khan Muḥāyyir al-Mamālik during Muhammad Shah's reign (see illustrations on pp.19, 20).

The scribes of the Khalīlī Qur'ans include master nasbī scribes such as 'Abdullāh ibn 'Ashur (cat.10), Visal (cat.12), Zayn al-Abīdīn (cat.4), 'Alī 'Askar Areesjani (cat.14) and his son Muḥammad Shafī' (cat.28), and Muhammad Baqī' (cat.52). Other scribes who are either less well known or documented poorly are also represented in the Collection, and a few previously unrecorded nasbī scribes can be added to the lists. Since most of the scribes of the Qurān wrote in nasbī, a nasta'īqī script would be employed when interlinear translations and marginal commentaries were included, and occasionally one finds the names of both scribes (cat.19 and 24). This system was already in use during the late Safavid period, since Muhāmmad Isfahānī signed himself as tarjumān-nasbī-i qurān-i naskhī ('the scribe of the translation of the Qurān') when copying manuscripts other than Qur'ans and religious books. Master nasta'īqī scribes represented in the Collection include Visal (cat.12) and his son Muḥammad Hākim (cat.22).

The dating system in the colophons of the manuscripts ranges from simple Arabic numerals to a full dating in Arabic (cat.1, 4, 5, 11, 27 and 67) or Persian (cat.3, 6, 22 and 70). The abjad system, involves adding up the value of each letter in a phrase to give the date. When used in the Qurān, Qur'anic quotations and Arabic phrases are used (the same system of dating is used in Persian manuscripts, but a Persian verse or a phrase is used instead of an Arabic phrase). An example is cat.28, in which two different phrases are used for giving the same date, AH 1396: 'ayd ghaḍr wa 'ina mabah la-qurān karim wa la 'yasaṣaba illa al-mutahādirin (Qurān surah al-Waqi'ah [70] verses 77 and 79), but only by omitting all the shadās.

A particularly complicated system is also found in two Qur'ans in the Collection. Cat.15 gives the date as: ... fi al-'asbri al-thānī min al-sabri al-tā'ī min al-sanāh al-khānsī [sic] min al-'asbri al-tā'ī min al-mi'āb al-thānīhay min al-sabri al-thānī ... (On the second tenth [10–9] of the ninth month [Ramadan] of the fifth [2] of the sixth decade [2], of the third century [1], of the second millennium [1]), which would make 10–19 Ramadan 1254/17 November–6 December 1838. Cat.30 gives it as: ... fi shab [sic] al-tā'ī min al-sanāh al-nabīhay min al-'asbri al-aswad min al-mi'āb al-nabīhay min al-sabri al-thānī ... (In the ninth month [Ramadan] of the fourth of the first ten [1] of the first century [0] of the fourth [3] of the second millennium [1] of the hijra'), that is, Ramadan 1303/5–22 June 1886. The earliest appearance of this system is in a copy of Dala'il al-khayrāt in the Khalīlī Collection copied by Muḥammad Taqī ibn Muḥammad al-Kātib al-Bihbātānī (ms 334, ex-catalogue). Here the date is
given as: qad kamada al-kitāb nabīr al-jum'ah al-yawm al-thāmin min shāh al-thāmin min sanah al-thānisah min al-`ashr al-thāmis min al-qarn al-thānī `ashar min hijrah ...

(The book was completed during the day on Friday, the eighth of the eighth month [Sh'ban] of the second year [1] of the eighth decade [7], of the 12th century', or 8 Sh'ban 1721/7 April 1758.)

Very few colophons contain the name of the illuminator, such as Abu'l-Qasim (cat.1). Unusually, two copies of the Qur'an in the Collection give the names of the restorer, 'Ali ibn Tahir al-Radawi\textsuperscript{110} and the book-binder, Aqa Sayyid Hasan (cat.11). The covers of another Qur'an in the Collection bear the name of a 20th-century restorer, Muhammad Yusuf Sahrif ('the book-binder').\textsuperscript{111}

By the end of the 19th century the Holy Book had additional uses. The Word of God is translated into Persian in interlinear bands, and the virtues for reciting each chapter are given according to Shi'a sources. Most Qur'ans contain instructions for use in divination. The Qur'an continued to be used as a guarantee for oaths, and more than before to register births (cat.2, 3, 7, 8, 10, 22, 30, 32, and 66): all the Persian birth notes belong to the period between Nasir al-Din Shah and 1951.\textsuperscript{112} Notes of death are also found (cat.20, 32 and 66).

Copies of the Qur'an were also often used for oaths in a political context and for treaties (cat.12). A reference in the Tārtīkh-i gīšt gūshā on the events of the year 1202 (AD 1787–8) mentions that 'Aqiqi Khan sent a copy of the Qur'an to Agha Muhammad Khan, on the back of which was written a note asking for forgiveness.\textsuperscript{113} Agha Muhammad Khan saw the Qur'an and the note, accepted it and treated 'Aqiqi Khan kindly. Sepehr records a petition sent to Kamran Mirza by Muhammad Khan and his father Iskand Khan in 1205 (AD 1889–90), together with an oath on the back of a copy of the Qur'an, and confirmed by their seals.\textsuperscript{114} Amin al-Dawlah also wrote at the back of a Qur'an, promising that he would never betray Muhammad Mirza.\textsuperscript{115} The Talpurs wrote treaties at the backs of their Qur'ans as well, as seen in cat.9. Describing the Talpurs, Sepehr says that the four brothers who established the kingdom of Sind had signed a promise not to embark on anything without consulting the others; if one turned from it, then the others would oppose him and remove him from his seat of power. The same tradition also applied when sending their envoys to the Persian court.\textsuperscript{116} When the British demanded due tribute, the Mirs produced a receipt written on the leaves of the Holy Qur'an absolving them of all past dues and obligations.\textsuperscript{117}

The possession of a copy of the Qur'an was the pride of any owner, and hence notes of acquisition (cat.12, 32) and presentation (cat.32 and 33) are found in Qajar copies of the Qur'an. However, notes concerning later opinions on the manuscript, librarians' notes and seal impressions, descriptions of the manuscript and repair notes, which are to be found in earlier copies, are rarely found in Qur'ans of this period.

\textsuperscript{1} Atabey 1352, pp.6–7.
\textsuperscript{2} Atabey 1352, nos 51, 52, 56 and 66. The covers of the translations of the Torah and the Qur'an (nos 14 and 66) are dated 1335/AD 1724–5.
\textsuperscript{3} Zarrinkoob 1978, pp.639–40.
\textsuperscript{5} Nāṣir-i inscriptions in cartouches relate to restorations undertaken in the Qajar period.
\textsuperscript{6} Assaf, ed. Moschiriz, p.429.
\textsuperscript{7} Mustawfi 1371, i, p.216.
\textsuperscript{8} Mustawfi 1371, i, p.337.
\textsuperscript{9} Mustawfi 1371, ii, p.219.
\textsuperscript{10} Mustawfi 1371, i, p.464.
\textsuperscript{12} Sepehr, ed. Belbudi, i, part one, pp.56, 61.
\textsuperscript{13} Fasa', trans. Busse, pp.69–70.
\textsuperscript{14} Christie's, London, 10 October 2000, lot 20.
\textsuperscript{15} Atabey 1352, no.331.
\textsuperscript{16} Kelabi 1352, no.390.
\textsuperscript{17} Karimzadeh 1989, pp.59–67.
\textsuperscript{18} For specimens of his calligraphy, see Welch 1979, no.67; Christie's, South Kensington, 8 January 1997, lot 312; 23 October 1997, lot 339.
\textsuperscript{20} For example, Atabey 1371, nos 120, 136, 137; Atabey 1371, nos 17, 38, 209, 239, 259.
\textsuperscript{21} Fasa', trans. Busse, pp.64–5.
\textsuperscript{22} Karimzadeh 1989, p.222.
\textsuperscript{23} Karimzadeh 1989, p.306 (pl.1).
\textsuperscript{24} Karimzadeh 1989, pp.221–2.
\textsuperscript{25} Karimzadeh 1989, p.275.
\textsuperscript{26} Karimzadeh 1989, p.59–62.
\textsuperscript{27} Karimzadeh 1989, p.61.
\textsuperscript{28} Many of these manuscripts are still in the Gulistan Palace Library in Tehran.
\textsuperscript{29} Raha Husayni 2316, pp.83–7.
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29. See Bayani 1345–53, 17, pp.9, 20, 82, 94, 117; Atabah 1311, no.8.
31. Atabah 1353, 11, no.313.
32. Atabah 1352, 11, no.425.
34. 'Aruf Al-Dawlah, ed. Khul, p.12.
35. Bahrami & Bayani 1348, no.144.
36. Atabah 1353, no.335.
37. The main text of this Qur'an had been copied in A.H.1095 (A.D.1682) in nasta'liq; Atabah 1353, p.112.
41. Mafsun, ed. Kavyapur, pp.269, 273. Mafsun's Nizārīẕ-i īdarād was composed before Visāl became famous as a nasta'liq scriber.
42. Fā'is ibn trans. Busto, p.281.
43. Gulkhin 1347, no.184.
44. Ru'ūn Hāzīnī 1356, pp.93–95.
46. Ru'ūn Hāzīnī 1356, pp.83–85.
47. Atabah 1353, no.9, 9, 418.
49. Atabah 1356.
50. Atabah 1357, p.87.
51. Atabah 1357, pp.73–75.
52. For his drawings, see Atabah 1368, pp.83–86.
55. Moustafá (1371, 11, pp.14–1) records that Prince Abd al-Majid signed his own copies of Abd al-Majid Talquin's hand with the master's name.
57. Khowājā gara of khanākhā Fabā'ir (n.k.128) signed his own copies of Abd al-Majid Talquin's hand with the master's name.
60. Safvat 1996, no.112.
64. Another Qur'an was commissioned by the Imam of al-Mā'thir, ed. Atabah,
p. 182) mentions him among the master calligraphers living in Tehran.


100. To give a few examples: the illuminator of the Government Publishing House and Press under Nāṣīr al-Dīn Shāh was a cleric with the name of Mulla Ghulam Husayn Modabbirī (Fīrūz al-Saltānāb, ed. Rezvāni, p. 213). Muhammad Ja’far, the scribe of a religious work entitled the Ṣīdah-ye taqlab-diyah, was a dākhil as well as copying the text, he executed the illumination and the margination (Atabáy 1312, no. 164). The scribe and the illuminator of a Qur’ān presented by Nāṣīr Nasīr Khan Ta‘lū to the Shrine Library at Mashhad was Mulla ‘Alī Borujjī (Gulchín 1347,p.311).

102. Žíjeh 1992b, no. 6.
103. The earliest copy of the Qur’ān with Persian translation was copied near Rāy 110 13 Safar 556/12 February 1161 (Yahyāqī 1362); for others, see Gulchín 1347, nos. 24 and 28; Bahrānī & Bayāni 1348, nos. 26-7, 36-41; Ḥarūnī 1988, pp. 22-5; 22-5, 36-41; 41-2, 41-2, 42 and 103. The same tradition continued to be used in the 14th and 15th centuries (James 1992b, nos. 10, 17, 29, 31 and 32; Gulchín 1347, no. 40). Interlinear Persian translations are found in Timurid (Atabáy 1311, no. 126; Gulchín 1347, pp. 147-149; and 150; Sāfsafī Qur’āns (Gulchín 1347, no. 96). Later, narrow ruled pages were provided to include the translation, as seen in a Qur’ān in the Khalīlī Collection (Bayāni, Contadini & Stanley 1999, no. 45).
104. Bayāni, Contadini & Stanley 1999, no. 133 and 44. The earliest 15th century copy in a religious manuscript dated 1022 (1612); Atabáy 1324, no. 395.
107. The Qur’ān copied by a female scribe was ordered by Nāṣīr al-Dīn Shāh for his trip to Europe in 1307/Ah 889 (Atabáy 1311, nos. 43).
111. Bayāni, Contadini & Stanley 1999, no. 72.
112. Many Qur’āns in the Gulistan Palace Library contain birth notes of Qajar princes, for example, Atabáy 1311, no. 59, written by Mūsāfīr al-Dīn Shāh. The earliest published birth dates are in a Qur’ān in the Shrine Library, Mashhad, where the births of three children are recorded during the years 1347-52 (A.D. 1143-7); reproduced and published by Yaḥyāqī 1364.
114. Sepēhr, ed. Bebbudi, 1, part one, pp. 6-11.
Nineteenth-century artists with the name Abu'l-Qasim

by Manije Bayani

Various recorded pieces bearing the name Abu'l-Qasim indicate that there must have been more than one artist with that name during the reign of Fath'ali Shah. 'Abd al-Razzaq Danbali, pen-named Maftri (d. AH 1243/AD 1827–8), the author of Nigāristān-i dārā (composed in AH 1241/AD 1825–6) recorded the names of Darvish 'Abd al-Majid's two pupils. He writes that one was Fazl'ali Bayg, Maftri's eldest brother, and the other Mirza Abu'l-Qasim known as Mirzā Kuchak Kbuchjū-ī Isfahanī who died in Isfahan in AH 1220 (AD 1805–6). 1

Karimzadeh identifies the illuminator of cat.1; the scribe and the illuminator of the firman of Fath'ali Shah in the Khalili Collection addressed to Mijmar Isfahani and dated AH 1223 (AD 1809; see p.26); the painter of lacquer covers dated AH 1222 (AD 1807–8); and the original scribe of an unidentified piece by Muhammad Taqi muazzhib-bābšī who had transferred Abu'l-Qasim's work, as Abu'l-Qasim al-Husayni al-Musawi al-Isfahani (the ilustrious sayyid of Isfahan who held the title muazzhib-bābšī and praises him for his hand in shikastab and taqīq, in illumination and in painting). 2 He also lists another contemporary Abu'l-Qasim as an oil painter. 3

Mehdi Bayani separates the naskh scribe from the shikastab scribe and the illuminator. 4 According to Sephr, recorded by Bayani, Abu'l-Qasim was called Mirza Kuchak, wrote shikastab in Darvish's style and died in AH 1240 (AD 1824–5). 5

In fact, recorded works show there were at least four artists with the name Abu'l-Qasim during the reign of Fath'ali Shah. One was a naskh scribe, who might have copied cat.1; a Qur'an in the Gulistan Palace Library illuminated by the order of Fath'ali Shah, which bears two colophons, one dated AH 1232 (AD 1816–17) by Muhammad ibn Abu'l-Qasim, the scribe's son, who states that since his father (namely the naskh scribe of the text) had died in AH 1232 (AD 1816–7), he was requested by a certain Ramazan Ali to write a short colophon and explain the deceased's hand; and two calligraphic pages in naskh dated AH 1230 (AD 1819–20) and AH 1236 (AD 1823–4). He signed as Abu'l-Qasim Isfahani. 6

Another was a shikastab scribe, titled Mirza Kuchak, who wrote the second colophon of the Qur'an mentioned above in the Gulistan Palace Library in shikastab, saying he had been asked by Ramazan Ali to write the marginal texts, which he began in AH 1224 (AD 1809–10) and completed in AH 1228 (AD 1813). He signed as Mirza Kuchak and was clearly alive in AH 1228 (AD 1813).

Nineteenth-century artists with the name Abu’l-Qasim

[master] should not be destroyed, so Aqa Sayyid Hashim sahib [the bookbinder] transferred it, and I, Muhammad’Ali, Sultan al-kuttab Isfahani wrote [the inscription]. The Gulistan Palace Library Qur’an and Mijmar’s firman both indicate that he was a sayyid, once by using the phrase nagan-i sadat Abu’l-Qasim al-Husayni, and once by his nisbah, al-Husayni.

The superb illumination of cat.1 could only be the work of a chief illuminator and as indicated in Mijmar’s firman he was working in a royal workshop.

The fourth Abu’l-Qasim was an oil painter of female figures who signed himself as nagan-i kamatarin on two pieces both dated AH 1237 (AD 1821–2). To sum up, there were at least four artists called Abu’l-Qasim during Fath’ali Shah’s period: a naskh scribe who died in AH 1220 (AD 1805–6), recorded by his son; a sbakhsb scribe known as Mirza Kuchak, still alive in AH 1228 (AD 1813), and who therefore did not die in AH 1220 (AD 1805–6) as Mafzani records; an illuminator, who was a sayyid and nuzubeh-bahir and who died in AH 1240 (AD 1824–5); and an oil painter of female figures signing himself as nagan-i kamatarin and active in AH 1237 (AD 1821–2).

2. 1337/38, see Verrooi 1997, no.311.
5. Bayani 1345–51, IR. pp.8–9 and 211.
9. Atabey 1311, no.8, pp.18–21; Bahrami & Bayani 1312, no.133, p.82.
12. Muhammad’Ali is not to be confused with the scribe of that name (AH 1315–1316/AD 1505–6) who was the father of ‘Abd al-Husayn Isfahani, the scribe of cat.3.
Single-volume Qur’an
Iran, Isfahan, pre-1806

This Qur’an is one of the finest illuminated manuscripts of early 19th-century Iran. The extensive use of gold, silver and lapis-blue, the quality of the calligraphy and the fineness of the illumination all indicate that it must have been made for a special patron, most probably Fath’Ali Shah himself.

Uunusually, the signature of the illuminator, Abu’l-Qasim, appears on the opening pages of the text (folio 3a). His boldness in choosing the opening pages for his name testifies to his high reputation, and he was evidently a muazzahib-bâshi (master illuminator).

There are traces of a colophon to the text on folio 248b, written in white riqâ’. It reads: ‘The guilty servant [of God] ... wrote it ...’. The choice of the word al-‘âthim for ‘guilty’ can only be for rhyming purposes, a practice with a long tradition that goes back to at least the 14th century on seals. Al-‘âthim (pronounced in Persian al-asim) naturally rhymes with Qasim, whether in its simple form or as Muhammad Qasim, or more likely Abu’l-Qasim. The undeciphered part could have contained his patronymic, ‘ibn ...’. The complete colophon would then have read: bur-usbuh al-‘âbd al-‘âthim [ibn ... Abu’l-Qasim]. If this was the case, he could well be the same scribe as that of a Gulistan Palace Library Qur’an that was copied in Isfahan (see pp. 25–7). Nothing more of him is known, except that he was sufficiently distinguished for his copy of the Qur’an to have marginal texts by Mirza Kuchak and illumination by Abu’l-Qasim muazzahib-bâshi. He had a son called Muhammad, and died in AH 1220 (AD 1805–6). This would give a terminus ante quem of 186 for this Qur’an.

The manuscript opens with a double-page spread (folios 1b–2a) of illumination in gold, silver and polychrome. The inner panels contain large lobed cartouches in gold, the central one with a prayer in red riqâ’, and inscriptions in white riqâ’ in smaller cartouches above and below, stating that the Prophet has recommended the prayer to be recited on commencing the Qur’an. The surround of the cartouches is filled with feathery scrolling flowers, mainly in gold on a slightly tarnished silver ground, and outlined in black with touches of polychrome. The margins are similarly decorated but without the feathery motif, and on an uncoloured ground. The following opening (folios 2b–3a) bears surah al-Fatîshab (1) and the beginning of surah al-Baqara (2), and is also illuminated. The background to the text is filled with fine gold illumination of scrolls and leaves. The illumination of these pages is mainly in lapis-blue and gold, but with touches of polychrome. The following opening (folios 3b–4a) has rich linear gold illumination of scrolling flowers and leaves between the jodoul and the kamand.

The style of naskh is that of Nayrizi, and its copyist was clearly a master scribe. The text is written in clouds on gold throughout. Surah titles are in white riqâ’ on a plain gold ground, often in cartouches set in a lapis-blue or a red panel decorated with fine gold illumination, bordered with a band in cherry-red or various shades of blue decorated with crosses and dots. Catchwords are in naskh. Textual divisions in red riqâ’, some of them faded, and one in white on folio 23b are placed in variously shaped devices bordered with flame motifs, similar to those in the two Nayrizi Qur’ans in the Collection. A few text divisions (folios 71a, 115b, 203a, 249b) are written in cherry-red riqâ’ in devices drawn with tassel-like finials all in gold (juz’ markers are in polygonal medallions, half-juz’ in pear shapes, hiyab in lobed horizontal cartouches and sujub markers in almond shapes). The lacquer covers, which may not be original to the manuscript, depict a bouquet of various flowers in a central panel on a gold-spinkled ground, and a band of scrolling flowers in the border. The doublures depict narcissus and ranunculus on a red ground, with a border of gold feathering on black.
6th-century Iran. The title and the fineness of the patron, most
likely Abū al-ʿAlāʾ ʿAbd al-Malik, is attested by the legendary name of the master scribe. The white ʿalāʾ of the title ʿalāʾ ʿAbd allāh ʿAbd al-Malik, and the illuminations are typical of the period and the region.

The page contains a large illumination in gold, silver, and colored inks. The writing is in black ink, with gold highlights. The text is written in Arabic script, and the page is decorated with geometric and floral patterns. The illumination features a large, central figure, likely representing a religious or historical figure, surrounded by intricate designs.

In the lower part of the page, there is a smaller illumination, featuring a band of scrolling leaves and flowers, possibly indicating a decorative or ornamental element.

The page is part of a larger manuscript, and the text is arranged in columns, typical of the period. The script is clear and legible, indicative of the high quality of the manuscript.
This Qur'an, which is written in clear naskh, was commissioned by the head of the Afshar tribe, Husayn Quli Khan, while he was governor of Urumiyya. From the two colophons, it is clear that after the completion of the main text in November 1802 the scribe was asked to add specific information at the beginning. This section starts with an illuminated head-piece, bearing a panel with an inscription written in gold riqa’ā; hāshā fārist al-kalam al-mujtad al-tabharāni wa’l-sab’ li-mashā’ir [sic] ("This is the index of the Divine Glorious Word, and "The Seven oft-repeated [verses]"). This is usually understood to be surah al-Fāṭihah, which has seven verses and is most often used.

The preliminaries, which follow the title, are in Persian shikastah (folios 1b–4b), written in gold- and black-ruled panels, in different formats. They include eulogies of the patron, followed by ruled panels with headings in naskh. The text in each panel deals with various subjects, beginning with the meanings of certain essential concepts: nubū’ ("revelation"); sīrat ("chapter"); the number of surahs, arranged according to when they should be recited; āyah ("verse"); the number of verses, the shortest and the longest and the number of heteronyms and homonyms according to their meanings; kalimah ("word"); the number of words, the shortest and the longest, and the number of letters; the benefits of reciting the Qur'an according to the number of letters (i.e., each letter counts 10 points); the most- and least-used letters; muqtab ("diacritical points"); buraq (letters with diacritical points); the number of dots in all; and ʾāyah (the use of the correct vocalization) and the use of vowel signs, the number of different vowel signs, and their properties. Finally, the text covers what each letter of the alphabet stands for: alif for aṣfaṭ ("fraternity"); bā for bishā’ ("joyful riding"); and so on — this could be understood as a form of divination, except that the meaning given to the particular letter is invariably positive. There are a few verses in Persian in praise of each letter in the Qur'an, and a colophon (folio 3b), which reads: 'The index to the Divine Glorious Word was finished in the month of Rabi' al-Thani, the year 1220 [July—August 1805].’ This is followed (folio 4a–b) by a complete index of the chapters written in gold riqa’ā, arranged in gold- and black- or red-ruled panels, followed by the first few words of the chapter, written alternately in red or black naskh, with the Arabic number of the chapter in blue. On the following page (folio 5a) the prayer to be read on commencing the Qur'an is written in naskh in the form of a lozenge at the centre of a frame with gold and black ruled lines, with instructions in Persian in red shikastah. The main Qur'anic text begins with a double-page of illumination (folios 5b–6a) in gold and vivid polychrome, in which vermilion is prominent, with the text written in clouds reserved against plain gold. The margins are decorated with scrolling feathery leaves and lotus blossoms, executed in gold and outlined and highlighted in polychrome on an uncoloured ground.

The vocal signs are drawn as almost horizontal, not sloping. No reading instructions are given. Catchwords are in a casual hand. Surah titles are written in white riqa’ā outlined in black on plain gold cartouches, with illumination mainly in lapis-blue, gold and orange at each side, and are framed with an unusual dark olive-green band. In some cases no space is provided for the colour illumination (folios 28a, 29b, 24b). Text divisions and sajdah markers are distinguished by illuminated tear-drop-shaped cartouches, outlined with flame-like motifs, and with foliate finials. Unusually, these are placed on their sides (not upright and pointing upwards), except for the juz’ markers, which are placed upright and are larger than the other text divisions. The division terms are written in riqa’ā of a different colour. Traditions on the virtues of reciting each chapter, according to various Shi’i Imams, are written in the margins in Persian shikastah, and are arranged in different shapes (folios 26a, 28b, 28a). These seem to be unfinished, since the usual gold contours
The Fath'ali Shah period

are missing. The same applies to the prayer to be read on commencing the Qur'an, and the text in the ruled frames of the preliminaries.

The text of the Qur'an is followed by a short prayer, and then the colophon (folio 184b), which records that this is the 30th Qur'an copied by Muhammad al-Tili, a student of theology (jalabah) and the son of Isma'il. It was completed in AH 1217 during the last ten days of the month of Rajab (16–27 November 1802) by order of Husayn Quli Khan, chief (bayqar bayg) of the Afshar tribe. The following folios (284b–290a) contain a short prayer, to be recited on concluding the Qur'an, and a long prayer from the Sab'fiabh Sajjadyyah with an unusual word-by-word Persian translation in red riqa'. For lack of space, the translation of the last lines of each page is written in smaller plain shikastah in the same panel as the text. A birth note (folio 292b) in a casual shikastah gives the name of a daughter, Amina Khatri, born on the eve of Wednesday, 2 Rajab 1280, corresponding to tanggiz il, 'the Year of the Pig' (1 January 1864).

The patron, Husayn Quli Khan, son of Imam Quli Khan Afshar of Urumiyah, is mentioned in connection with the quelling of the uprising in western Azerbaijan following the assassination of Agha Muhammad Khan at the end of the year AH 1211 (AD 1796–7). Having accomplished his mission, he was appointed governor of Urumiyah by Fath'ali Shah. His sister Baygum Khatun was Fath'ali Shah's 15th wife, and his daughter Qamar Nisa Baygum the Shah's 16th wife. The scribe is otherwise unrecorded. He was in any case a highly productive scribe to have made 30 copies of the Qur'an by AH 1217 (AD 1802). The naskh al-Tili has not been identified, but it shows that he was not born in Urumiyah, though that was his place of residence at the time he copied this Qur'an. He wrote in different styles, naskh, riqa' and shikastah, all of them well.

The covers are dark-brown morocco with a sunken central medallion, pendants and corner-pieces overlaid with stamped gold scroll and floral decorations. Stamped gilded circles and leaves form the marginal bands. The doublures are plain red morocco, with a band of gilded stamped circles at the borders.
3 Single-volume Qur’an

Iran, perhaps Isfahan, AH 1228 (AD 1813–14), dated twice

The manuscript opens with the Morning Prayer of Imam ‘Ali (folios 1b–3b), followed by directions in Persian for reading it in the prostration position, then by lists of the various hizb to be read on each day of the week, with the headings written in gold riqa’ (folio 4b). These are followed by an illuminated spread (folios 4b–5a) bearing a prayer, written in gold riqa’ in two large lobed medallions of lapis-blue decorated with gold scrollwork, surrounded by scrolls and flowers in gold and polychrome on an uncoulored ground.

The main text of the Qur’an begins on folio 5b, with an exquisite double-page spread of illumination, predominantly in cherry-red, lapis-blue and gold, with elaborate head-pieces and crenellated borders on a lapis-blue ground with minute scrolling arabesques. There are seven lines of text, written in clouds reserved against gold. Above these, the surah titles are in gold riqa’ in lobed illuminated cartouches on a cherry-red or a lapis-blue ground, set in panels of illumination in gold and polychrome. The lower cartouches contain the surah al-Waqi’ah (61), verses 79 and 80, ending on folio 66a with a date, “The year 1228” (AD 1813–14). The inclusion of the date on the opening pages is unusual, but it seems to be a practice in illuminated Qur’ans of particularly high quality, and is signed by the illuminator Abu’l-Qasim.

The text is written in fine naskh, in gold-ruled panels, with narrow interlinear bands provided for Persian translation, which is, however, confined to folios 94a–99b, which contain parts of the surah al-Tawbah (9) in red nasta’liq. This chapter deals with the infidel, punishments for hypocrites and God’s forgiveness for repentant sinners. The texts with interlinear Persian translation refer several times to the misuse of wealth: “... And there are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the way of God: announce unto them a most grievous penalty – on the day when heat will be produced out of that (wealth) in the fire of Hell, and with it, with which they were branded their foreheads ...” (part of verses 34 and 35); “And among them are men who slander thee in the matter of the distribution of the alms. If they are given part thereof, they are pleased, but if not, Behold! they are indignant!” (verse 55); “Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds); For those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to the Truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of God; and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by God, and God is full of knowledge and wisdom” (verse 60): ‘They enjoin evil, and forbid what is just, and are close with their hands ...” (part of verse 67). The purpose of the translation of only this section may have been to remind the owner not to misuse his wealth and to spend it in the cause of God.

Catchwords are written in a casual nasta’liq between the jadwal and the kamsar. Text divisions are indicated by illuminated eight-pointed rosettes for juz’, oblong cartouches for hizb, and palmettes for nif and safad. Occasional comments in a minute hand, between the lines or sometimes in the margin, correct mistakes (folio 246a) or restore a missing verse (folio 284b). Surah titles are in gold riqa’ in coloured cartouches. The illuminations of these headings are of two types. Most cartouches are lapis-blue (other colours of equal quality are also used, for example, on folios 232a, 256a, 259a) set in a panel decorated with florets and cartouches of gold, red and blue. Those on folios 294a–297b are in variously coloured cartouches (orange, turquoise, pistachio-green, lilac, black, pink, sky-blue, gold) set in coloured panels and decorated with polychrome florets. The same is occasionally seen at the middle of the manuscript (for example, folios 212b, 219a). The quality of execution of the second type differs markedly from the first. The colours become flat and dull, the finish is rather poor, and the patterns change. Even the verse markers, and the markers for the text divisions that appear alongside them, are different, and must have been executed by another, markedly inferior illuminator. The use of variously coloured
The Fatih'ali Shah period

(Translation of Arabic text)

The illuminations are in various colours of equal brilliance and almost always decorate the borders of the headings. (The manuscript is in continuously written pencil, and the script is occasionally in a fine, straight hand.) The quality of the ink is flat and the black and red markers, and the gold and silver, are in variously coloured
grounds for surah headings was a Safavid tradition, which gradually went out of fashion in the 19th century.

The main text is followed by prayers to be recited on concluding the reading of the Qur'an (folios 297b–298a). This is followed by a double-page illuminated spread (folios 298b–299a) identical to folios 49–52. The text here, however, is the colophon in praise of the patron, a merchant called Aqa Muhammad Baqir at whose request the Qur'an was copied. It is written in the most florid epithets, which must all allude to his standing. The scribe, Haji Ja'far al-Qazvini, states that this is the 19th Qur'an he has copied. He must have been highly regarded to have copied such a lavish Qur'an, and 18 others as well, even though nothing else is known about him or his works.

The numerous attributes given to the patron in the colophon match Muhammad Baqir Shafi, who was also known as Muhammad Baqir Rashini, or Sayyid Bid Abadi (AH 1180–1260/AD 1766–1844). He studied in Iraq, and Qum, and finally settled in Isfahan in AH 1217 (AD 1802–3), where he built the Sayyid Mosque, the largest and most important 19th-century mosque of the city. Although a muftahid (theologian and jurisconsult), he was known to have acquired astonishing wealth. Badad comments that Muhammad Baqir was not only marja'-i taqalid (an ultimate authority in matters of religion), but he was the richest and most influential of all, amassing enormous wealth through trade. His wealth other than trading and real estate was his library, to which he was passionately devoted. It was considered unique at the time for its rare and valuable manuscripts, and he claimed that there was no book he did not have a copy of. The library was valued in excess of 90,000 tāhirās. One of his sons, Haji Sayyid Asadullah, was content merely to have inherited it, and left the rest of the estate to the other heirs. Muhammad Baqir is described as particularly interested in collecting magnificent, rare or unique manuscripts, especially those written in naskh. The patron of this Qur'an is very probably the same Muhammad Baqir who commissioned the restoration of another Qur'an in the Collection.

On folio 296b is the beginning of a fahānūnah in Persian verse form (Safavid tradition) as far as letter ch (the rest is missing). The letters for the opening are written in gold. This Qur'an is probably a late specimen of the Safavid tradition, and may, indeed, have been copied from a Safavid original. Folio 2a records the birth of three girls and one boy between AH 1159 (AD 1747) and AH 1162 (AD 1749). Their names are Zinat Khanum known as Afsar al-Muluk, Fatimah Khanum known as Fakhr al-Muluk, Sakina Khanum known as Zinat al-Muluk and 'Ali Khan.

The lacquered covers, which are similar in pattern and arrangement to the binding of cat. 7 and 11, depict a bunch of flowers on a gold-sprinkled ground, bordered with bands of flowers and gold illumination on a black ground. The doubles have medallions and pendants filled with flowers, on a field of scrolling gold vine leaves and bunches of grapes.
The Fath'ali Shah period
4
Single-volume Qur'an

Afghanistan, possibly Kabul, Rab‘ al-Thani 1229 (March–April 1841)

This small-format Qur'an, written in neat nasthī, is an example of the meeting of the 18th-century Iran and Indian traditions. The scribe is recorded as ‘Abd al-Ghafur-i Naskhī. He lived during the reign of Zaman Shah Durrani (reg. AH 1207–15/AD 1791–1800), Mahmud Shah (reg. AH 1215–18/AD 1800–03 and AH 1224–33/AD 1809–18), and in Herat until AH 1245/AD 1829) and his son Kamran Shah (in Herat, reg. AH 1245–55/AD 1829–42). He was secretary to three unidentified personages, ‘Abd al-Rahman, Mirza Buzurg and Mirza Muhammad Qasim. ‘Abd al-Ghafur’s home town was Herat, but he moved to Kabul in AH 1233 (AD 1789–90). It is not known whether he returned to Herat. While in Kabul, he copied prayers for Muhammad Ibrahim Jamshidi (the head of the corps of pages at the court of Zaman Shah and the chief of the Jamshidi clan), on which he left his seal impression with the legend: ‘Nasthī is illuminated by his name, as long as ‘Abd al-Ghafur is the scribe of the Qur'an. To commemorate his accession, Kamran ordered a copy of the Qur'an by the hand of ‘the greatest calligrapher of the time’ (‘Abd al-Ghafur). The only other recorded manuscript by this scribe is a Qur'an dated AH 1224 (AD 1809–10) that was sold at Christie’s, and later at Bonhams. It was attributed to India or Iran, but mistakenly dated to the 18th century. A scribe of the name of ‘Abd al-Ghafur is listed by Bayani as an unknown scribe of India, of the 12th century AH (18th century AD). A few signed but undated calligraphic pages are recorded, all in nastā‘īqī. The attribution of these to the ‘Abd al-Ghafur responsible for cat. 4 is highly plausible, since he is known to have been a secretary and nastā‘īqī was the typical secretarial hand.

The text of this Qur'an is written throughout in clouds reserved against gold. Surah titles are in red riqā‘ī over plain gold cartouches, set in coloured illuminated panels. Catchwords are in nastā‘īqī. Three different types of marginal indication are used. Every juz’ and half-juz’ is marked by gold almond-shaped devices, many highlighted with colour. The words bism and sawt are written in gold riqā‘ī between the jadwal and the ka’mand. The letter ‘ayn in red marks rukū‘ (‘bowing of the head’) throughout. The practice of marking rukū‘ is an Indian tradition; the almond-shaped marginalia are common in both India and Iran, but bism marking in riqā‘ī is more an Iranian tradition than an Indian one. The combination of the Herati scribe, Indian markings, the marginalia, the Iranian-style nasthī and the lacquer covers, which have characteristics of both north India and Iran, all fit an attribution to Afghanistan, where the Durrani dynasty ruled between AH 1160 (AD 1747) and AH 1238 (AD 1822). Quotations from the Prophet’s traditions (and not from ‘Ali or the šī‘a Imams) also point to a Sunni culture, to which the Durransis adhered.

The manuscript opens with an illuminated spread in gold and polychrome (folios 1b–2a) with head-pieces and cancellation borders in gold on lapis-blue, followed by another double page of gold illumination with a continuous floral and foliate scroll between the jadwal and the ka’amand (folios 2b–3a). A prayer in gold riqā‘ī is written in the margin on folio 79b: ‘I take refuge with God from the fire of Hell, and the evil of infidels, and the wrath of the Omnipotent. Might is for God and for His Messenger.’ The same prayer appears in an 18th-century Qur’an from North India with Qajar additions made in 1826. The prayers are both appended to the surah al-Tāubah (36) and reflect the same tradition. The number 15 of juz’ 15 is written as 51 on folio 118b.

The manuscript ends with a long colophon stating that this was the third copy of the Qur’an ordered by Shaykh Muhammad Ismā‘īl Khan Jami. The combination here of a characteristic title for a Sufi leader (qutb) with ‘Shaykh’ indicates that Muhammad Ismā‘īl Khan was probably an important Sufi, and his nisbah, Jami, may indicate that he was a Naqshbandi.
The Fath 'ali Shah period

The covers are lacquered, with a loosely tied bouquet of flowers in the central panel, on a ground that was afterwards painted with gold, and lobed corner pieces reminiscent of Kashmiri work. The borders contain traditions of the Prophet concerning the reading of the Qur'an and its benefits, written in riqa', and the signature of the scribe: harrasaheb 'abd al-ghafur al-harawi 1229 (Written by 'Abd al-Ghafur Harawi, 1229 [AD 1813-14]). This is the scribe of the main text. The lacquer painter also signed each cover, as ya imam Zayn al-Abidin ('Oh Imam Zayn al-Abidin'). The corners of the calligraphic borders are decorated with florets. The doubleuses are red lacquer, decorated with a gold-illuminated vine bordered with an undulating foliate scroll.

It is difficult to identify Zayn al-Abidin. The date fits the painter Zayn al-'Abidin Afshar, who is recorded by Karimzadeh. His two extant works are both dated AH 1235 (AD 1819-20), one depicting a shaykh with his pupils, and the other the Ka'bah; no flower paintings are mentioned. Karimzadeh believes him to have been a pupil of Muhammad Zaman II. The only other recorded object with a similar signature (ya zayn al-‘abidin) is dated AH 1262 (AD 1846). No other piece by the same painter is reported and we may have a rare case of the work of an Afghan lacquer painter. The covers seem to be copies from a Persian original. If they are the work of a Persian painter, it is possible that they were modified to fit this Qur'an manuscript and the borders were added. The gold of the field is in any case a later addition.

The meeting of the
abd al-Ghafur-i
7-15 [AD 1793-1800],
7-18, and in Herat
145-18 [AD 1819-42].
Mirza Buzurg and
but he moved to
Kabul. While in Kabul,
drapt of pages at
1344 and he left his seal
at 'Abd al-Ghafur ordered a copy of
Ghafur) 1
AH 1224 [AD 1809-10]
India or Iran, but
Ghafur is listed by
the eleventh century AD). A few
the attribution of
since he is known to
against gold. Surah
inscribed panels.
the ju'dul and the
The penultimate screen is common
than an
the marginalia, the
of both north
the Zand dynasty ruled
the Prophet's tradi-
to which the
(folios 1b-2a)
owed by another
scroll between the
margin on
of infidels, and the
same prayer appears
made in 1826. The
same tradition. The
the third copy of
the combination here
is that Muhammad
may indicate that he
The Fath'ali Shah period
5
Single-volume Qur'an
Iran, Isfahan, Rab' al-Thani 1229 (March–April 1844)

This Qur'an is the earliest dated copy by the well-known long-lived Isfahani calligrapher Zayn al-'Abidin.

Zayn al-'Abidin ibn Muhammad Taqi Isfahani worked under Fath'ali Shah, Muhammad Shah and Nasir al-Din Shah, with the titles kâtib-i sulṭān, ashrāf al-khattāb and sulṭān al-khāṣṣātīn. Though a pupil of Aqa Mahmud Isfahani, he copied Ahmad Nizari's hand and often praised Nizari in his colophons. During his long life he trained many pupils, including Sayyid Muhammad Baqa, the scribe of cat.32. His recorded works are dated between 1217 and 1229 (AD 1835–73), with the exception of numerous calligraphic pages and a letter, these comprise copies of the Qur'an and religious treatises dated between 1222 and 1228 (AD 1837–42).²

Zayn al-'Abidin's earliest piece bearing the attribute sulṭān is dated AH 1234 (AD 1858–9), which indicates that at this point he was employed in the scriptorium of Muhammad Shah. Only two pieces are recorded with the title ashrāf al-khattāb ('Most noble of scribes'), one of them dated to AH 1229 (AD 1852–3). The latter also includes the only record of the title sulṭān al-khāṣṣātīn ('The Sultan of scribes'). A copy of letters and documents covering the period between AH 1216 and 1254 (AD 1801–39) was made by a court secretary with the pen-name of Furugh. In this, the epilogue to a copy of the prayer jātehsan kāhīr, which Zayn al-'Abidin wrote for Fath'ali Shah in AH 1225 (AD 1838–9), concludes with the signature Zayn al-'Abidin kâtib-i sulṭān;² not kâtib al-sulṭān as the scribe would have signed himself had he been accorded that title. It is very likely, therefore, that Furugh copied the original documents in the reign of Muhammad Shah after Zayn al-'Abidin had been granted the title,³ and the inclusion of this title for an earlier work must be a sign of respect rather than an allusion to a title conferred on him by Fath'ali Shah. It is all the more likely that Zayn al-'Abidin was not accorded the title under Fath'ali Shah, since the scribes using the title kâtib al-sulṭān in his reign were Muhammad Mahdi Tehrani, 'Ali Akbar Taftrishi, Muhammad 'Ali Khwansari and 'Abd al-Latif Larijani, who all signed themselves as kâtib al-badshat al-sulṭān or just kâtib al-sulṭān. In fact, the entire colophon to this prayer book is an unusual mixture of Persian and Arabic, which Zayn al-'Abidin never used, raising the question whether Furugh altered the content as well, and what was the purpose of copying these documents.

Zayn al-'Abidin's last recorded work is a calligraphic page dated AH 1289 (AD 1872–3), and is signed, uniquely, sulṭān al-khāṣṣātīn ashrāf al-khattāb Zayn al-'Abidin. This suggests that he received the two titles from Nasir al-Din Shah. This piece gives the additional information that he wrote it at the age of 102, without spectacles. In an undated petition to have his regular salary transferred to his son, however, he signs himself as Zayn al-'Abidin al-mu'min (called) ashrāf al-khattāb.¹ He was clearly a nāshib and riqā' scribe. The Persian translations or marginal texts in nastā'īrq that occur in his manuscripts were all written by other scribes. Fūmād al-Saltanah recorded that he died in Isfahan about the age of 100 on 9 Shaban 1306 (20 April 1887).³ However, since Zayn al-'Abidin himself wrote in AH 1229 (AD 1852–3), he must have lived at least the age of 209. Sepehr states that Mirza Zayn al-'Abidin mašk al-khattāb was in the retinue of Nasir al-Din Shah on his visit to Isfahan in AH 1267 (AD 1850–51).⁴

The manuscript opens with three blank gold-ruled pages (folios 1a–2a), followed by a double-page of illumination in gold and polychrome (folios 2b–3a). The central field is divided into cartouches of alternate plain and pale gold (possibly the result of a thin silver wash over gold) bearing the index to the Qur'an written in red riqā', on a ground of quatrefoils alternately in blue and red. The margins are illuminated with scrolling flowers and leaves in gold, and outlined in black with touches of colour on an uncoloured ground.
Folios 36r–44r bear a double spread of illumination with medallions and pendants in which the prayer to be recited on commencing the Qur'an is written in blue naskh in gold on a plain gold ground, bordered with a band of flowers on a blue ground. Similar illumination is used for the corner-pieces. The field between the medallions and the corner-pieces as well as the margins are illuminated with scrolling flowers and leaves, mainly in gold with touches of colour on an uncoloured ground. The quality of the illumination is inferior to that of other pages.

The main text of the Qur'an starts with a double-page of illumination (folios 46r–50r) mainly in gold, cherry-red and lapis-blue. The entire text is written in naskh in clouds reserved against gold. Text divisions are marked in gold riqa' in illuminated devices with finials (bijab on red, and the rest on blue lobed medallions). Surah titles are written in gold riqa' on a ground of lapis-blue or red set in illuminated panels in gold and polychrome. The traditions concerning various surahs reported from Shi'i Imams are written in subkastab in clouds reserved against gold in illuminated framed panels in the margins. The main text finishes (folio 203a) merely with the date, fi 1229 (AD 1813–14). This is followed by a prayer, and then the colophon, which states that the Qur'an was written for the eminent theologian Mulla Mubin, and was completed on a Friday in the month of Rabi’ al-Thani 1229 (March–April 1814) by ibn Muhammad, Zayn al-Abidin al-Ishani. The patron, Akhund (cleric) Mulla Mubin, has not been identified. Different prayers are suggested on concluding the reading of the Qur'an and are written on the following pages (folios 203b–206a), with instructions in red riqa' in Persian. The final two pages (folios 206b–207a) are identical to folios 36r–44r in arrangement and decoration, except that the prayer is the usual one to conclude the reading.

The lacquered covers depict flowers in the central panel on a gold ground and cartouches in the margins with flowers on a red ground. The borders and sections between the marginal cartouches have gold illuminations on a black ground. The doublures have gold floral sprays on a black ground, and cartouches in the border bands in which a prayer is written in riqa', also on a black ground. The prayer is in verse form invoking the intercession of The Fourteen Immaculates.
This small Qur'an was copied in Shiraz in AH 1244 (AD 1829), but was mostly illuminated during the second half of the 19th century, when the original text of the first chapter (surah al-Fatiha) and the beginning of the second (surah al-Baqarah) was erased and rewritten, together with the index to the Qur'an and the opening prayer. The main text was written in the shaky hand (similar to cat.64, 67) of an unrecorded scribe, Rajab’ali ibn Muhammad ‘Ali, while the traditions connected with the chapters are by a different scribe.

The manuscript opens on folios 1b–2a with "The Great Prayer" (du‘a‘-yi buzurganwar) recommended by Imam ‘Ali but reported from the Sahih of al-Bukhari. The prayer is to be recited after the morning prayer for a continuous period of 40 days to gain knowledge and wisdom. The text ends with two partial lists of the ashab-i-kahf ("The Seven Sleepers"), the names of five of them in red and of six in black, the two lists separated by the so-called Seven Seals of Solomon, and ending with a pentagram. The text panels and the gold illumination at the end of the prayer (folio 2b) belong to the earlier period. The space between the text frame and the outer frame was illuminated in the later 19th century with scrolling blossoms and leaves in gold and outlined in black with touches of green and red on an uncoloured ground, interrupted by dome-shaped devices illuminated with lapis-blue, red and green. These are followed (folios 2b–3a) by a double-page spread of illumination including the index of the Qur’an, written alternately in red and dark-blue riga‘ on gold or silver squares. The margins are illuminated with scrolling flowers and leaves in gold with touches of green, pink and red on an uncoloured ground. The following double-page spread of illumination (folios 3b–4a) bears the prayer to be recited on commencing the Qur’an written in riga‘ in medallions and pendants on a plain gold ground, on a field of mainly gold-illuminated vertical lobed cartouches and coloured corner-pieces. The margins are decorated exactly like the previous pages. The soft blue, cherry-red and silvery gold of the early 19th century have been replaced by lapis-blue, pink, red, green and yellowish gold. The only illuminations from the earlier part of the century are the marginal gold scrollwork on folios 1b–6a, the field on which the names of the ashab-i-kahf (folio 2a) and the colophon were set (folio 23b), and the end of the last prayer on folio 23b.

No reading instructions are given. Text divisions and surah titles are written in red riga‘ on a plain gold ground, set in coloured devices or panels respectively. The marginal illuminated devices are similar to those of cat.24 and 27. Unlike other Iranian copies of the Qur’an where the marginal text includes traditions according to the Shi‘i Imams, this Qur’an gives those of the Prophet, and only occasionally according to ‘Abd al-Jabbar. These are written in ibrikast and outlined in gold, with interlinear gold patches. The choice of the Prophet’s traditions and the opening prayer and the inclusion of the names of the ashab-i-kahf (particularly favoured by Sunnis) and the absence of divination indications cumulatively to indicate that this Qur’an was copied for the use of a Sunni, not a Shi‘i Muslim. It was evidently regarded as sufficiently important to merit rich illumination later in the 19th century.

The final chapter is followed by a short prayer and then the colophon (folio 23b), which, contrary to normal practice, gives first the place and the date that the text was copied and then the name of the scribe. This is followed by a prayer to be recited on concluding the Qur’an, which also differs from that in other Iranian Qur’ans. It ends (folio 23b) in the form of a hanging banner surrounded by scrolling gold leaves and flowers on an uncoloured ground. Folio 23b bears a crude magic square.

The lacquer covers depict birds and flowers on a gold-sprinkled olive green ground, bordered by a band of floral scroll in gold on a black ground. The doublures depict a narcissus with a recumbent deer gazing at it, on a plain greenish-mustard ground.
The Fath'ali Shah period

The prayer is to gain knowledge of the Seven Sleepers, ascribed by the so-called Sufis and the gold God. The space of the 19th century with green and red on gold and blue, illumination of blue and gold leaves in gold and double-page mescing the Qur'an field of mainly The margins are silver gold of the yellowish gold. (a) and the colophon are written in red. The marginal Persian copies of Shi'i Imams, this Imam Ja'far. These are the names of the nation indications of a Sunni, not a rich illumination (folio 193a), that the text was be recited on con-

45
This lavishly illuminated Qur’an is wholly characteristic of the 19th-century Qajar style. The manuscript opens with a double-page spread of illumination (folios 18–2a) enclosing the index of the Qur’an in gold rectangles written alternately in blue and red ṭiqā. These rectangles are separated by illuminated quatrefoils, alternately on a blue and on a red ground decorated with flowers and leaves in gold and polychrome. The margins are decorated with scrolling flowers and leaves and small cartouches, mainly in various shades of gold outlined in black with touches of colour on a gold ground. The small cartouches are painted blue or red. The outer borders of the margins are further decorated with fine tassel-like motifs in blue. The following pages (folios 2b–3a) include another double-page spread of lavish illumination, predominantly in gold. The central panels contain rosette-like medallions and pendants in which the prayer to be recited on commencing the Qur’an is written in gold ṭiqā on a lapsi-blue ground decorated with gold scrolls. Extra cartouches and corner-pieces are decorated with fine flowers and scrolls on a red or a blue ground. The fields surrounding the panels and the margins are similar to those of the preceding spread.

The main text of the Qur’an opens on another double-page spread of illumination (folios 3b–4a) that differs from the previous pages, in that a greater range of colours is used as the ground for fine floral illuminations. The text is written in ruled panels in clouds reserved against gold, alternating with narrow bands for the Persian interlinear translation in red nastaliq on a plain gold ground. The panels above and below the text include the surah titles and surah al-Waqi‘ah (361, verses 79–80), written in gold ṭiqā. The following double-page spreads have marginal illuminations similar to folios 1b–3a, except that the polychrome cartouches are larger, fewer and different in shape.

An illuminated device with finials at the upper right-hand corner of the ‘b’ folios includes the abbreviated forms for the istikhabah (from folio 3b to folio 31b), while a similar device at the upper left-hand corner of the ‘a’ folios contains the title of the surah (from folio 32 onwards, the device on the ‘b’ folios also contains the title of the surah and not the istikhabah). These indications are, respectively, in blue and red ṭiqā, but all on a plain gold ground. The abbreviated forms for the istikhabah, written in blue, also appear at the beginning of the related verse, which often runs on from the previous page. This is the earliest documentation of the practice, which is also found in cat. 8. Catchwords are in nastaliq.

Surah titles are in gold ṭiqā on blue or red cartouches decorated with scrolling arabesques in gold, framed by illuminated panels in gold and polychrome. Text divisions are marked by illuminated cartouches for hizb, rosettes for juz‘, almond shapes for sajadah and quatrefoils for misr, all with foliate finials. Traditions concerning each surah according to various Shi‘i Imams are written in shikastah in vertical panels in the margins in clouds reserved against plain gold, with a band of illumination in gold and polychrome outlined with flame motifs at the top and bottom. Folio 312a bears an additional marginal commentary on surah al-Rûm (XXX), relating to the Arab conquest of Fars, which was left unilluminated. The final two surahs are written on a double-page spread (folios 321b–322a) of illumination in gold, cherry-red and lapsi-blue, with crenellation borders framed by a cherry-red band. These are followed by another double page of illumination similar in arrangement to folios 2b–3a, but in a different colour range. The surround of the central eight-lobed medallion is decorated with foliate and floral scrolls of gold outlined in black with touches of colour on a silver ground, while the margins are illuminated on an uncoloured ground (not gold as on folios 2b–3a). The text of these folios is the prayer to be recited on concluding the Qur’an.
The 19th century Qajar style.

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The preceding spread.

Illumination

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controlling arabesques

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sawād and

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(folios 321b–322a)

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ound of the central

olored in black.

os is the prayer to
Unlike other Qur'ans of this quality, the colophon (folios 323b–324a) is unimpressive in appearance, and even the paper of folio 324 differs from the rest of the manuscript. Although the scribe had indicated the extent of the illumination required by writing the colophon in two panels, this was executed only some decades later, in AH 1287 (AD 1870), when gold ruling and poorly drawn scrolling flowers and leaves were painted around one panel (folio 323b). This may have been because the Qur'an was originally ordered by a patron who for some reason later reneged on his commission.

The decoration of the colophon—which gives the name Aqa Fath‘ali Khuraskani (or Khorasani according to Busse) and the name of the scribe, Muhammad Isma‘il—and its language are reminiscent of the Qur'ans acquired by the Talpurs (cat.10, 11, 12). The unfinished illumination and its poor quality also point to cat.12, copied by Visal, in which the additional prayer and Visal’s colophon were left unilluminated until it reached Sind. Cat.7, therefore, may have failed to reach its destination because of the political situation in Sind and Aqa Fath‘ali Khuraskani may have been the intermediary between the copyist and illuminator of this Qur’an and its anonymous patron. Folio 324a also bears two birth notes, one dated 9 Shawal 1284 (6 December 1867), the other 17 Ramadan 1287 (11 December 1870), and shows that the gold rulings were added after they were written.

Aqa Fath‘ali of Khuraskani/Khorasani has not been identified, and there are only a few signed works bearing the name Muhammad Isma‘il. Among them are: a prayer book for a certain Ibrahim Khan dated AH 1246 (AD 1829–30); a prayer scroll in the Khallili Collection (MSS 210) written for Prince Alishah, son of Fath‘ali Shah, and dated AH 1230 (AD 1844–50); and a collection of prayers dated AH 1245/AD 1829 sold at Sotheby’s. These could all be by the same scribe, and since all are illuminated, and three of them were specially commissioned, Muhammad Isma‘il must have been a well-known copyist of prayer books, and therefore a cleric.

The contemporary lacquered covers are in 18th-century style and contain a central panel depicting flowers of all kinds on a red marquise (gold-spinkled) ground. The margins are decorated with small blossoms and leaves on a dark-green ground, between guard stripes of gold fleurons on a black ground. The doublettes bear lobed medallions depicting a bunch of flowers, and pendants with single tulips. The field is decorated with scrolling flowers and leaves in gold on a black ground. The binding is similar in pattern to those of cat.3, 7 and 11. The flyleaves of the manuscript are blue marbled paper.
The Fath'ali Shah period

The manuscript, written by the well-known copyist
dated AH 1230 (AD 1815),
and decorated with a central
medallion and a border of painted
inscriptions, is a fine example of the
Fath'ali Shah period.

The content of the manuscript includes
sections from the Qur'an and
the Hadith, written in naskhi script.
The layout is divided into columns
and margins decorated with
geometric patterns and floral
motifs.

The manuscript was commissioned
by Fath'ali Shah, who is known for
his patronage of arts and learning.

The design and craftsmanship
reflect the high standards of
Persian art during this period,
showing a blend of
Achaemenid and Islamic
elements.

The Fath'ali Shah period
is characterized by
a flourishing of
literature,
architecture,
and the arts,
with contributions from
both Persian and Indian
influences.

The manuscript is
an excellent
example of
this artistic
period,
highlighting
the rich
heritage of
Persian
culture.
This small codex is the second part of a two-volume Qur'an, starting with surah Maryam (xxx). It is written in fine naskh, larger in scale than one would expect for a Qur'an of this size. Although not of the same quality, the illuminations are in the same style as those of cat.7. The manuscript opens with a fine double-page illuminated spread on folios 1b–2a. The central panels have corner-pieces and lobed medallions and pendants bearing the prayer to be recited on commencing the Qur'an, written in gold riqa’ on a lapis-blue ground, decorated with gold scrolls. As in cat.7, the illuminated ground of the medallions and pendants, and the marginal devices too, are mainly in two shades of gold outlined in black, with only a few touches of lapis-blue and red. The main text begins with a double page of fine illumination in gold, lapis-blue and red, and a similarly impressive head-piece but with zigzag borders. The heading for surah Maryam is written in a lapis-blue cartouche in gold riqa’, but the number of verses is not fully given, being written as ‘eight and (ninety)’. In fact, very few of the surah headings give the complete number of verses. The text on folios 2b–4a has interlinear gold patches. The margins of folios 3b–4a are decorated with foliate and floral scrolls in gold outlined in black, with touches of colour on an uncoloured ground.

Surah titles are written in gold riqa’ on cherry-red or lapis-blue cartouches decorated with gold scrolls set in fine illuminated panels in gold and polychrome. Text divisions and sajdhah are in illuminated devices with finials. Juz’ and sajdhah markers are almond-shaped, one on a blue and the other on a red ground, and mas’ and hizb markers are palette-shaped, and, like the others, are on a blue or a red ground. Catchwords are in naskh. Traditions concerning each surah are written in Persian in naskh in the margins in illuminated vertical cartouches in clouds reserved against plain gold. Many of them are reported from the Prophet, not only from Shi’i Imams. These are also written in a larger hand than one would expect from this size of Qur’an. Occasionally, words are broken up and written on two lines (for example, folio 5a, bi-allah; folio 5b, fa-lata’ufa; folio 14, fa-lata’ufa; folio 19, la’jum). Illuminated devices are placed at the top corner of each page, bearing the title of the chapter on the ‘a’ folios and the abbreviated indications for the istikhbarah on the ‘b’ folios, all written in lapis-blue on a plain gold ground. What is unusual in this Qur’an is the marking of every verse for use in istikhbarah. These appear in blue in abbreviated form at the end of each verse up to folio 268a. The indications in the illuminated devices refer to the verse, which is carried over from the previous page (similar to cat.7).

The main text is followed by three different prayers to be recited on concluding the Qur'an (folios 304b–308a), each marked by illuminated panels similar to surah headings. Fine foliate scrolls in gold separate the last prayer from the colophon, which gives the name of the scribe, Mohammad Shafi’ al-Khurassani (or Khurasani) and notes that the patron, Haji Mir Muhammad Sadiq, had made a pilgrimage to the Ka‘bah and the Prophet's tomb. There follows one page of a double illuminated spread similar to the opening folios (16–24a) bearing the beginning of another prayer to be recited on concluding the Qur'an. The occurrence of the colophon before the final prayer is unusual.

The village of Khurassan or Khurasan is in the Isfahan oasis, and, according to another note, the Qur'an was still in Isfahan between AH 1334 and 1339 (AD 1516–20), which suggests that the patron was from there. He may be the same Haji Muhammad Sadiq who endowed various parcels of land to the Friday Mosque in the town of Qumshah, south of Isfahan. According to a waqf-namah carved in grey stone and placed in the mosque, he was the son of Mulla Husayn from Qumshah, and having no son gave the custody (awalidi) of his waqf to his daughter Kubra, and after her death to his grandsons, and so on. The waqf-namah is dated AH 1240 (AD 1824–5). It also mentions his pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina and his
visit to the tomb of the Prophet. Muhammad Shafi' is otherwise unrecorded. He is likely to have been the scribe of the marginal commentaries too.

The manuscript was later re-bound and extra pages added, both at the beginning and the end. The births of two sons, Naqshband Khan, in the house of Mirza Asadallah Vazir in AH 1334 (AD 1916), and Amir 'Ata Khan, in the "English Hospital" in AH 1336 (AD 1918), and a daughter, Asitas Khanum, in AH 1339 (AD 1921), are recorded on the new opening pages. Mirza Asadallah was known as Vazir (the minister) for his long service as governor of Isfahan. The English Hospital was in that city.

The lacquer covers are decorated with a bunch of flowers on a mustard-yellow ground, bordered with a narrow black band decorated with flowers and leaves in gold. The unusual decoration of the doublures consists of an all-over pattern of squares with conspicuous diagonals, with gold rosettes or leaves where lines cross or in between them.
The Talpur Mirs of Sind

by Manijeh Bayani

History

The Talpur family of Sind was a short-lived dynasty that ruled between 1783 and 1843. Their regime is generally described as a crude military feudalism, the Mirs having little education or refinement, and living in primitive Baluch simplicity on their hoarded wealth. However, their Qur'ans, which have recently come to light, and their substantial armoury call for a reassessment of their cultural contribution in Sind, particularly at Hyderabad.

The Talpur Mirs were of Baluchi tribal origin and appear in the histories as officers and ministers of the Kalhora kings of Sind from the mid-18th century onwards. Their rule in Sind began with the overthrow of the last Kalhora king by Mir Fath'ali Khan and his recognition by Timur Shah, king of Afghanistan, who in 1783 sent him a robe of honour, a horse and a sattar (document) appointing him ruler of Sind. Another treaty was signed with Timur Shah in 1790, and Fath'ali Khan, who paid 24 lakhs of rupees of tribute in arrears, was rewarded with a jewelled sword, an elephant with a howdah and a new royal sattar, confirming him as the ruler of Sind.

Fath'ali Khan assigned Khayyurpr to Mir Subrab, and Mirpur to Mir Thara, but retained most of Sind for himself and his brothers, settling at Hyderabad, which he made his capital. He and his three brothers, Ghalam Ali, Karnali Ali (owner of cat.11 and 12) and Murad Ali (owner of cat.9 and 10) jointly ruled central Sind, and while they lived their strength and support for each other was such as to gain them the title of Charh-e-Yar (The Four Friends). Mir Fath'ali Khan's seniority, however, was respected. On his death in AH 1217 (AD 1803), Sind was divided between his three brothers and his son Subdar, with Ghalam Ali as the paramount chief. It was during their reign that Sind came into closer contact with the British, who, fearing French, Afghan and Russian designs on India, sought to create a pro-British buffer state.

British political and commercial expansion into the Indus Valley had already begun under the Kalhoras. Further negotiations were opened with the Talpurs in 1799. Mir Fath'ali Khan seems initially to have promised the British commercial privileges, but he revoked these shortly afterwards, which called forth British demands for compensation. In 1808, however, the apprehension raised by Napoleon's military mission to Iran caused them to waive their claims and settle for an offensive and defensive alliance with the Talpurs. The Mirs, for their part, alarmed by the British and fearing an Afghan invasion, sent their first recorded mission to the court of Fath'Ali Shah in Iran. The mission took with it a declaration of obedience and submission, together with the customary gifts, and appealed for the protection of the Shah. The envoy were received in the winter of AH 1222 (AD 1808). In return, Fath'Ali Shah sent an inlaid sword for the senior brother, Ghalam Ali, and a precious robe of honour for each of the other three Mirs, together with an assurance that the Talpurs would from then on be counted his allies and protected by the government of Iran.

A year later, in AH 1223 (AD 1808–9), the Iranian ambassador returned from Sind accompanied by a Sindi envoy, Mir Thabit 'Ali, with a petition from the lords of Sind and gifts including four rifles with inlaid stocks, a steel shield and other valuables. As a consequence Sir Harford Jones (1764–1827), the envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the East India Company to the court of Iran from 1807 to 1811, was summoned by Fath'Ali Shah and told that since the kingdom of Sind was now an ally of Iran the British should take care to treat it well. The governors of Khurasan and Fars were also ordered to react to any incursions by the Afghans from Herat or Quadalhar into Sind territory, while another mission was sent to Iran with yet more gifts and petitions the following year (AH 1224/AD 1809). The political agent Sir Henry Pottinger's account of his mission in 1809 reflects the Mirs' suspicion of British intentions, though it did eventually lead to a treaty of friendship between the British government and the Mirs that excluded the French from Sind. This treaty was signed by Ghalam Ali, Karnali Ali and Murad 'Ali in Rajab 1224 (August 1809). Ghulam Ali died in AH 1227 (AD 1811), and was succeeded by his brother, Karnali Ali Khan. Nothing of note occurred until 1820, when the British concluded a fresh treaty with the Mirs, which mainly provided for the exclusion of all other Europeans and Americans (sic) from Sind. The treaty was ratified in 1821.
The Talpur Mirs of Sind

After the death of Karam'ali Khan in AH 1244 (AD 1828), his brother Murad 'Ali Khan became the paramount ruler. According to Dr James Burnes who visited Sind, writing in 1839, the principle feature of Murad 'Ali's character was avarice, and none knew the working of his 'gloomy soul', or shared his confidence. Pottinger, writing some years later, also emphasized his avarice but conceded that he was by far the ablest man in Sind. In particular, Kalichbeg praised his authority over the Baluch, and the peace and prosperity of his reign. Talpur fears, exacerbated by the gathering of some 6,000 British troops in Cutch, brought further missions to Iran. In AH 1246 (AD 1830) Mirza Muhammad 'Ali Shirazi was sent as Mir Murad 'Ali's envoy to the Iranian court with a message of devotion and three elephants, 30 Kashmir shawls and other valuables. He arrived on 11 Rabi'i al-Thani of that year (29 September 1830), and was received by the Shah. On the return journey he was accompanied by Nazar 'Ali Khan, the Qajar ambassador to the court of Sind, bearing a robe of honour and a sword for Murad 'Ali Khan from Fath'ali Shah. Although no reference is made to their motivation, we may assume that these diplomatic exchanges were political in character.

The British had meanwhile signed a treaty of alliance with Iran, and eventually succeeded in drawing up a treaty of friendship with the Talpurs. Murad 'Ali Khan was the first Talpur Mir to sign a treaty with the British, granting them commercial access to the Indus. This was signed in Dhu'l-Qa'dah 1247 (April 1832), but was modified in 1834, when the customs duties were fixed.

The last of the Chubir Yar, Murad 'Ali Khan, died in AH 1249 (AD 1833), and a second group of four rulers, succeeded jointly to the throne and were ruling in Sind in 1838. Mir Nur Muhammad Khan and Mir Muhammad Nadir Khan, who were both sons of Murad 'Ali Khan; Muhammad Khan, the son of Ghulam'ali Khan; and Sardar Khan, the son of Fath'ali Khan, the only Sunni Talpur. Mir Nur Muhammad Khan, the eldest of the Mirs at Hyderabad, soon came to be acknowledged as the chief ruling Mir of Sind.

The Mirs' continuing suspicions of British policy and their friendship with Iran were a cause of concern for the British, who intercepted letters from the Mirs to the Iranian court seeking Qajar assistance in expelling them. Events in Kabul and what were described as 'Iranian intrigues' led to a British military confrontation with the Mirs and the temporary occupation of Hyderabad. A new treaty was signed in March 1839, which effectively dissolved the Talpur confederacy: each Mir was confirmed in his own estates; any differences were to be referred to British arbitration; and Sind was formally placed under British protection. The Mirs were to pay three lakhs of rupees per annum towards the cost of keeping British troops in Sind, as long as they were required. The East India Company's rupee was made the legal currency. Mir Nur Muhammad Khan died in AH 1256 (AD 1840) and was replaced by his brother, Mir Muhammad Nasir.

With the appointment of Major-General Sir Charles Napier as Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in Upper and Lower Sind and Baluchistan, with control over all civil, political and military officials, the British embarked on the conquest of Sind. New treaties were drawn up in 1842 and 1843 in which the Mirs were forced to make further concessions, which included the minting of coins bearing the image of Queen Victoria. Even this did not stop the advance of the British army, which culminated in the Battle of Maiwand and the surrender of all the Mirs, except for the ruler in Mirpur, Shir Muhammad (the 'Lion of Mirpur'), who was, however, defeated a few months later. By June 1843 the conquest of Sind was complete, and Napier was made its first governor. Mir Ali Murad of Khurpur, who had supported the British throughout, was permitted to remain in power. The others were all imprisoned and exiled, first to Bombay (Mumbai) and then to Poona (Pune). In AH 1260 (AD 1844) they were transferred to Calcutta (Kolkata) and Hazaribagh. Within ten years of the conquest, however, it became evident that they presented no danger in the province. In AH 1270 (AD 1854), at the representation of the Governor General, Lord Dalhousie, the Court of the Directors of the East India Company permitted the surviving Mirs and their families to return to Hyderabad, if they wished to do so.
British estimates of the education and cultural level of the Talpur Mirs vary considerably. Postans states that their sons were educated in the hasr, which they quitted only at the age of puberty for many exercises and the life of the court. Their education consisted of the Qur'an and a limited knowledge of the Persian spoken at the court, their highest accomplishment being to read or quote a few of the ordinary poems in that language, such as the dhunz of Hafiz and Sadi. This shows Postans's ignorance of Persian literature, for this feat presupposed a high level of educational attainment. W.J. Eastwick writes, on the other hand, that although some thought the Mirs barbarians, they were often more acute than people believed, while Lieutenant-Colonel Outram ends his account of the British conquest of Sind, which he strongly deprecated, with: 'The Ameers of Sind were, as men, singularly free from the vices which prevail in Mahommedan communities; more intellectual that their compsers in other eastern countries; temperate, and strongly averse to bloodshed; affectionate, kind, and gentle almost to effeminacy. As sovereigns they were mild and little oppressive in their sway, and ruled with a unity of design.' Nur Muhammad was the subject of similar conflicting assertions. On the one hand, in Postans's view, he was the keystone of the state, yet for others he was an illiterate member of the Talpur family, though, admittedly, the only one to be described as such.
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Whatever the case, he endowed a Qur'an to the shrine in Mashhad,32 and commissioned another Qur'an copied in gold.33 The Talpur Mhrs were patrons of literature and the arts.

In the Mhrs' administration credit is given to Iranian officials such as Ibrahim Shah and his son Isma'il Shah, or to one of the five sons of Isma'il, Zayn al-Abidin, for their statesmanship.34 Isma'il Shah became the adviser to the Talpurs in their foreign affairs.

Arms

The Talpurs were connoisseurs of horseflech, as well as being great hunters, and they are known particularly for their collection of arms and armour. Pottinger's record of his second visit to the court describes their swords and daggers, all of the finest steel, which were mostly purchased by the agents they dispatched every year to Iran and Asia Minor.35 Their tastes were shared by their subjects, and master gunsmiths were induced to settle at Hyderabad to cater to a vast demand for both guns and edged weapons, which afforded employment to one fifth of the inhabitants of the suburbs: some of their workmanship, in Pottinger's view, was scarcely to be distinguished from that of European craftsmen.36 In the court workshops guns were assembled with rifled barrels of
Damascus steel set in gold-mounted stocks with British locks, and Iranian goldsmiths were engaged to execute their enameled decoration. Postans adds that Sindi sword blades are large, curved, very sharp and well tempered. The sheath also contains a receptacle for a small knife, used for cutting up food and other purposes. Belts are made of leather or cloth, richly embroidered. Great taste is also displayed in the manufacture of pouches and other paraphernalia attached to the waist. Shields are made of rhinoceros hide, richly embossed with brass or silver, and are carried over the shoulder.

Other crafts and architecture

The natives of Sind under the Talpurs were noted for their skill as weavers, wood-turners and painters of lacquered woodwork, and Hyderabad workmanship was highly esteemed, even in England. Items of pottery from 19th-century Sind have also been published, bearing inscriptions stating that they were made at Hyderabad Sind. The Talpurs' appreciation of fine craftsmanship is unconsciously demonstrated in a would-be disparaging remark by Postans: 'If an artisan worked cunningly and well, his labour was seized, by order of an admiring prince.'

British sources rarely mention the Talpur Mirs' architectural patronage. Kalichbeg, however, refers to the building of two forts at Fatihgarh and Islamgarh, and a few mansions and three mosques in Hyderabad, all in the course of nine months of the year AH 1204 (AD 1788–9). Mir Karam'ali Khan was responsible for the restoration of the mosque of Khidri in Thatta in AH 1229 (AD 1813–14), and Mir Murad 'Ali Khan for the mosque of Amir Khattu, also in Thatta, in AH 1227 (AD 1812). Sir Richard Burton describes apartments in the palace at Hyderabad faced with decorative plaster mouldings and painted arabesques, noting that the painted chamber in Mir Shahdad Khan's house still showed 'the historic meeting of Ranjit Singh and Lord Lake'. The ceilings of the richest houses with their prominent beams were painted, lacquered and heavily gilt. Some of the rooms were revetted, in his words, like dairies with painted tiles from Hala and Multan, though when he first saw them, in 1845, they were not a little dilapidated.

Calligraphy

Sir Richard Burton observed of Talpur culture that although Sind was once celebrated for skill in calligraphy of all sorts, by his time (1848–9 or 1859) the only scripts in use were naskh, nastaliq and nasta'liq. The first of these was particularly well written in Sind. Shikastah, however, he found detestably bad, and Kufic quite forgotten, although the walls of tombs and mosques demonstrated to him that at one time it must have been common. He adds that the Talpur Mirs were great patrons of Iranian calligraphy, and used to send to Iran for, as he called them, well-known penmen.

The Talpur embassies to Iran were not only to seek protection and purchase arms; they also sought illuminated Qur'ans, particularly those copied by famous scribes like Visal (cat.12), 'Abdullah ibn 'Ashur (cat.10), 'Abdullah Yazdi and Muhammad Hadi Shirazi. Eastwick reports that Nur Muhammad had a library. It is not clear what happened to it. In his deposition to the Court of Directors of the East India Company of 22 September 1843, Muhammad Nasir states that a number of British officers, three of them named, entered the fort together with two regiments of cavalry and infantry and seized its treasures, including Qur'ans, books and even items as worthless as needles. The looting, which continued for seven days, was such that the markets of the city were awash with gold, jewels and all sorts of valuables. A narrative written by Mir Muhammad Nasir after he had been taken prisoner also states that the British even confiscated the books that the Mirs had retained for their distraction. The interest of the Mirs, moreover, was not limited to imported Qur'ans. They also had scribes and illuminators working at their court, including some of Iranian origin such as Ahmad Najaf Abadi, the scribe of cat.11, and Sayyid 'Ali ibn Sayyid Husayn Shirazi, who copied a Qur'an in gold for Nur Muhammad Khan in AH 1253 (AD 1837–8).
The distinctive illumination of the last pages of cat. 12 (folios 238–239a) is most probably the work of a local artist in Hyderabad. The Talpurs endowed Qur'ans to Shi'i shrines: Mir Nur Muhammad Khan made a Qur'an naqaf to the Shrine Library at Mashhad in AH 1236 (AD 1820–21), and Muhammad Nasir Khan endowed another that he had commissioned in AH 1245 (AD 1829). The latter, which Gulchin has described as a masterpiece of Islamic art in India, was presented by him when he took refuge at Mashhad on the British occupation of Sind in AH 1248 (AD 1833). Among manuscripts recorded in the Mirs' possession is the Shigarabah-namah, composed by the Qajar court poet Fath 'Ali Khan Saba, which recounts the exploits of Fath 'Ali Shah. It was copied by Abul-Qasim Mughal in late Shawwal 1227 (early November 1812) for Mir Murad 'Ali Khan Talpur. The existence of these manuscripts, and their otherwise unrecorded scribes, is cogent evidence for Talpur patronage in literature and the arts of the book.

It would be unfair to judge the Talpur Mirs' literacy or calligraphic skill from the informal notes they wrote in their Qur'ans: similarly, an informal note in Nasir al-Din Shah's hand is markedly more casual than his calligraphic hand. The fluency of certain letters in their notes, however, shows the work of trained hands.

Other recorded manuscripts copied for the Talpur rulers include the Mihakk-i-kamal, an anthology of poetical quotations, copied for Mir Karam 'Ali Khan at Hyderabad by Muhammad Salih ibn 'Abdallah and dated 28 Shawwal 1231 (21 September 1816); and a copy of the Hamlah-yi Haydar, copied by Mith 'Ali Husayni for Mir Karam 'Ali Khan at Surat in Dhul-Qidah 1236 (22 March 1820). An illustrated copy of the same text was also commissioned by Karam 'Ali Khan, copied by Muhammad Muhshin in AH 1238 (AD 1823). A copy of the Indian romance of Htt & Ranjha, dated AH 1248 (AD 1833) was copied by Muhammad Akram, for Muhammad Nasir Khan.

Poets
Nathan Crowe, the British Resident in Sind in 1799, records that the Amirs maintained a number of court poets. To enable scholars to acquire a thorough knowledge of Persian, the language of literature, ceremony and official correspondence, the Mirs encouraged mullas to open schools and also patronized the 'sayyids' of Rohri and Thatta, who were celebrated as repositories of learning. They were liberally remunerated for their teaching and amply compensated the state by turning out excellent Persian scholars. Akken wrote that in 1853 the number of small schools alone was reported to be more than 660, and many must have escaped registration. The ruling family in general, and a few of the courtiers who were permanently at the capital, had the additional advantage of learning the language from Persian masters. Thus Hyderabad too became a centre of learning under the Talpurs.

The number of court poets writing in Persian during the short-lived rule of the Talpurs is further proof of their patronage of literature. Fath 'Ali Khan Talpur ordered Sayyid 'Azim al-Din to record the battles between the Kalhoras and the Talpurs in a verse epic, the Fath-namah, modeled on Firdawsii's Shihnamah. The poem recounted the poet's own experience and became so popular that it was rehearsed at court in 1799.

Mir Karam 'Ali Khan, pen-name Karam, a well-educated man of literary tastes, who drew to his court poets and learned men, himself compiled a verse anthology, which he called the Majmuah-yi dastgahah. He particularly appreciated the poetry of Nur Muhammad Nur of Bubuk, whose pupil he considered himself to be. He was a constant companion of the poet Thabit 'Ali Shah and provided a suitable residence for him at Hyderabad. His court poet was Ghulam 'Ali Mal, one of whose sons, Mir Sabir 'Ali, pen-name Sabir, was also a celebrated poet. Azad, another poet who thrilled at the courts of Karam 'Ali Khan and Murad 'Ali Khan, even declined an attractive position at the Qajar court.

In addition to court poets and officials, such as the Finance Minister and the Custodian of the State Treasury, the government adviser on domestic policy, the court physician and the minister of court, as well as numerous other courtiers, scholars and Sufis, who all wrote verse, the Talpur
rulers and princes counted poets among their numbers. Besides Mir Karamali there were Mir Muhammad Nasir Khan, the son of Mir Murad‘Ali Khan, pen-named Jafarri, Sobdar Khan, son of Mir Fath‘ali Khan, pen-named Mir; Mir Shahdad Khan, son of Mir Nur Muhammad, pen-named Haydar; and Mir Husayn‘Ali Khan, a younger brother of Mir Shahdad Khan.66 Sadarangani, the author of Persian Poets in Sind, concludes that never in the history of Sind did so many ruling princes take to verse composition, although they seem to have been restricted to the Hyderabad branch of the family, since among all the poets mentioned only one resided in Shikarpur.67 This patronage amply refutes the disparaging judgements of British writers on the Talpur Mirs of Sind.

2. There is a possibility, for example, that objects associated with Hyderabad in the Deccan should be attributed to Hyderabad in Sind.
5. Various swords (unpublished) bearing his name have appeared on the London market in recent years, one sold at Sotheby’s, London, 12 October 2002, lot 168.
6. Swords of his are in the Wallace Collection, London (Laking 1964, no.1753), and see Paris 1988, nos 215 and 219. He also owned an Indian kard; Paris 1988, no.218. The Safavid blade of a Sindi sword bearing the name of Shah Solayman (reg. 1017-1025/AD 1606-16) also bears the names of the Talpur Mirs Karamali, Murad‘Ali and Muhammad Nazir (Paris 1988, no.216). He commissioned a Qur‘an dated 1212/AD 1802, sold at Sotheby’s, London, 29 April 1993, lot 127. A flintlock gun made for him was sold at Christie’s, London, 20 October 2000, lot 221.
21. His seal impression is in cat.122; a gun of Mir Muhammad Nasir Khan’s is in the Khalili Collection (Alexander 1994, no.1137), and there is another in the Wallace Collection, no.2015; and one of his swords is in a private collection (Paris 1988, no.216).
23. Postans 1973, pp.309-10; Kalichbeg 1902, p.246. For a letter from Pottenger regarding the Mirs’ correspondence with the Qajar Shahs, see Dodwell 1959, pp.315-36.
27. Postans 1973, pp.318-19; Murbarak Ali 1987, p.265. This derogatory opinion is also shared by Sir Richard Burton (1992, p.241). 'There is scarcely a single learned Beloch in the country. Even the princes contented themselves with an imperfect knowledge of Persian, with writing books of poems composed for them, and sending westward for works never to be perceived.'
32. Christie’s, London, 14 October 1997, lot 68.
35. The weapons that have been published are of fine workmanship, including two guns in the Khalili Collection (Alexander 1994, nos 156-57, 198, nos 214-21; Geneva 1981, nos 322-3). A kard with an enamelled hilt and scabbard, bearing the name of Fath‘ali Khan Talpur and dated 1120/AD 1706-7 and 1121/AD 1802-3, was sold at Christie’s, London, 24 November 1987, lot 247. For aold axe made in the workshop of Mir Murad‘Ali Khan by Muhammad Tej, captured at the Battle of Mimi, see Sotheby’s, Summers Place, Billingshurst, Sussex, 14 July 1998, lot 72. A sword bearing the name of Karimzadeh Khan was sold at Sotheby’s, London, 13 October 2000, lot 196. A flintlock gun made for Mir Murad‘Ali Khan was sold at Christie’s, London, 16 October 2000, lot 221. For a gun made for Murad‘Ali Khan see
mal; there were Mir Shabab Khan, son of Shudduhamad, pen-named darangani, the author ruling princes take to branch of the family,

 Ill 1915, p.168. This opinion is also shared and Burton (1915), is in this scarce single with an imperfect

soothing with writing composed for the British government, share this the

sustaining the heavy charge which the Sindhi always gives his piece. The European lock is attached to the Eastern barrel - the best of Joe Macon's and Purdy's guns and rifles, of which sufficient to stock a shop have at various times been presented to the Sindhi chiefs by the British government, share this


43. Thatahi, ed. Rashid, p.49, footnote for p.314, p.499, footnote

44. Burton 1877, p.250.

45. Burton 1877, p.147.


52. Ashraf 1969, no.2176.

53. Vermett 1997, no.63 marginal note and no.64.

54. Ivanov 1926, no.255, p.231. Ivanov adds 'A seal and scrappy notes on the fly-leaves'; these are likely to be by the Mifs.


56. Ivanov 1926, p.247, no.918. A calligraphic page in the Rampur Library, signed kamalat-i

kbnozadbat Muhammad Hekum sanat (1243 AD 1635-36), is probably by the same scribe; Bayasi: 1344-45, 145; no.841; 1345-46, p.17; 1345-46, p.127.


60. Darangani 1915, p.193.

61. Darangani 1915, pp.131, 179.


65. Kalichberg's description of Sobdar reads, rather grudgingly: 'He is not deficient in literary taste and attainment, if a knowledge of Persian books and poetry can be dignified by such an appellation' (Kalichberg 1902, p.379).


This is one of the four copies of the Qur'an in the Collection that were acquired for the Talpur rulers of Sindh (see cat.10-12). Folio 1a contains two notes of ownership by Mir Marad 'Ali and Mir Shahdad. The manuscript also has an English inventory number, 'no 21', written on folio 1a (there is a similar inventory number in cat.10), showing that the two Qur'ans were both in a group of manuscripts that came into British hands.

This Qur'an was originally much larger, but has been cut down to its present size. The paper is thin and brittle, similar to that of a Qur'an sold at Christie's with virtually identical gold floral lattice decoration in the margins (except the opening pages) and traces of a note by Mir Shahdad on the flyleaf.1 That copy has the same Persian interlinear translation and 'preface' as another Qur'an in the Khalili Collection,2 but in nasta'liq, not shikastah. The similarity of the Christie's copy to its paper and its marginal illuminations to the present copy points to a single centre of production, which, in view of the marginal commentary by 'Ali Riza ibn Kamal al-Din al-Ardakati, composed for the Safavid Shah Sulayman, must have been Shi'i.

The script is in the style of Nayrizi, and is characteristically 13th century. The illumination differs from that in other Qur'ans that came into the possession of the Talpurs, and is in at least two different styles, of three different periods. That of the double-page opening and a few surah headings is original and very fine, main y in gold and lapis-blue, which has partially faded. On folios 1b-2a, which contain the surah al-Fatihah (1) and the beginning of surah al-Baqara (2), it consists of finely drawn crenellated borders densely filled with fretted scrolls. The text is written in the central panels in clouds reserved against a plain gold ground, with the surah titles and the verse counts in illuminated panels above and below. The text division markers follow the old Iranian tradition in which every fifth verse is indicated by the word khamr and every tenth by 'asba', both written in carmine rûqî' in the margin, which confirms that the Qur'an was copied in India but in Iran. Other markers include hizb, juz' and nisr (a marking particular to India); these are mostly inscribed in gold medallions of various forms with finials in gold and polychrome.

The rest of the manuscript is written with interlinear gold patches. Catchwords are in naskh. The text is followed by a narrow band of floral scroll in gold with touches of colour on an uncoloured ground, and by a short prayer ending with a similar scrolling band (folio 20b). Traditions concerning the virtues of reciting each surah are written in vertical cartouches in minute shikastah, in clouds reserved against a plain gold ground. Although it is not recorded when these were added, they are of the same period as the last marginal devices for marking text divisions. The margins throughout are decorated in gold with repeating floral or geometric motifs on a gold-spinkled ground. These were also later additions, probably made in early 19th-century Sind. Surah titles are in carmine rûqî' on plain gold cartouches, set in illuminated panels in gold and polychrome, many of them repainted. Where parts of the Qur'anic text were incorporated into the panels they were distinguished by being written on a silver ground (see folio 20b), or in well-defined clouds reserved against gold (mostly from folio 21a to the end).

The lacquered covers, bound upside down, though originally of fine quality, are in a poor state of preservation, most probably the result of climate damage in Sind. The central panels contain flower and bird motifs arranged horizontally. The borders are decorated with flowers and leaves. The doublures bear lavish floral ornamentation in gold on a red ground.
Talpur Qur'ans

The present size, consisting of virtually unnumbered pages, and traces in nasta‘liq, not marginal illuminations, gives the impression of the marginal view of the Safavid Shah century. The illumination of the Talpurs, of the double-page gold and lapis-blue, al-Fāṭihah (1) and the lion borders densely reserved against illuminated panels above in which every fifth line is written in carmine in India but in Iran, in particular to India; these are gold and polychrome. Catchwords are in gold with three lines of scrolling band with small letters written in vertical columns. Although the later marginal portions in gold with names were also later written in carmine ragi' on some of the panels they were written in well-defined the quality, are in a in Sind. The central letters are decorated with gold on a red ground.
This early Qajar Qur'an, copied by 'Abdullah ibn 'Ashur in Isfahan, is another Qur'an that was acquired in Iran for the Talpur rulers of Sind.

Folio 1a has ruled margins in gold, silver and black, but has been left blank. The text starts on an illuminated double spread (folios 1b–2a) with the surah al-Fatihah (1) and the beginning of the surah al-Baqarah (2), in tones of gold, lapis-blue and cherry-red. The texts are written on almost square panels with plated gold frames, with the surah titles and verse counts in similarly framed oblong panels above and below. The border is of lobed crenellations and small medallions in gold on a dark-blue ground, all densely filled with polychrome floret scrolls. The entire text is written in fine nastāb in clouds reserved against plain gold throughout, with scrolling borders of feathery leaves and lotus blossoms in gold outlined in black, with touches of colour. Surah titles are written in gold riqâ’ on lapis-blue in cartouches, set in illuminated panels in gold and polychrome. Text divisions are marked in the margins by stars or stylized lotus-medallions illuminated in gold and polychrome. Traditions concerning each surah according to various Shi’i sources are written in lobed vertical cartouches in small dihakatāb in clouds reserved against a gold ground.

The main text is followed by a short prayer, and then by the first colophon (folio 229r) written in riqâ’, in a trapezoidal panel in clouds reserved against gold. It records the name of the scribe, 'Abdullah ibn 'Ashur, and the date, AH 1227 (AD 1812-13); this is his 81st Qur'an. 'Abdullah ibn 'Ashur was a well-known nastāb calligrapher of the early Qajar period, esteemed particularly for his numerous signed manuscripts and Qur'ans. He was from Runnān, near Isfahan. Many of his works were commissioned. His 101st Qur'an is recorded to have been written in Isfahan at the orders of Fath'ali Shah in AH 1231 (AD 1815-16). His copy of Zâd al-ma‘âd was commissioned by a certain 'Abdullah Khan in AH 1235 (AD 1819-20). Here he signs himself as 'Abdullah ibn 'Ashur al-Rumzani al-Isfahani. He worked in both Runnān and Isfahan, and his recorded work is dated between AH 1221 and AH 1235 (AD 1816 and AD 1820). The date of his death is not known.

Below the first colophon is a second one, also written in riqâ’ on an uncoloured ground, with the names and titles of the Talpur ruler in cherry-red: 'By the order of … Mir Sahib Mir Murad 'Ali Khan Talpur Hamzawī, the ruler of the kingdom of Sind …'. The second colophon is written in a different hand from that of 'Abdullah ibn 'Ashur and its content differs from those of contemporary Iranian Qur'ans, and does not say whether it was the copying, the illumination or the purchasing that was ordered by the Talpur Mir. The absence of a date, and the fact that Murad 'Ali Khan ruled between 1819 and 1853, makes it clear that the Qur'an was ordered to be acquired from Iran. It could well have been purchased by one of the missions he sent to Iran seeking Fath'ali Shah's protection against the British. On its acquisition, the colophon with its encomium of Murad 'Ali Khan, the prayers and the illuminations on folios 229r–230a must have been added in Sind.

The final folios (230v–230a) also bear two prayers written in nastāb in clouds reserved against gold, the headings left blank. The marginal illumination differs from that of the rest of the manuscript, and is probably the work of a craftsman at the Talpur court. A scrawled note in Persian on folio 230v reads: 'The religion of Muhammad', followed by the Arabic letter ṣad (for 'May God bless him and grant him salvation') and 22 November [November], with the date in European numerals, '1848'. On the same folio there is an English inventory number, '00 36' in brownish ink in an old-fashioned hand similar to that in cat. 9.

The European covers are of red leather, with stamped gilt decoration bordering a central panel of black velvet. The doublures are plain red leather, bordered with stamped gilt ornament. There are traces of patterning on the doublures, which at some point were also covered with royal-blue velvet.
Another Qur’an

The text is blank. The text includes the Fatiha (1) and the first eight surah titles.
The border is of red, all densely filled in clouds reserved and lotus blossoms, written in gold ‘igna’ on a gold ground. Text divisions are written in gold and sources are written on a gold ground.

(folio 229a)

It records the name of this was the first of the early Qajar Qur’ans. He was
is 1015 Qur’an is
n 1331 (AD 1813–16). Khan in AH 1335

He is between AH 1301 and 1305

The second coloured ground, of ... Mir Sahib
and ...: The second
whether it was
Talpur Mir. The
1813, makes it
have been purchased
against the British.
the prayers and the
clouds reserved
that of the rest of
court. A scrawled
by the Arabic letter
November], with
in cat.9,
bordering a central
stamped gilt
same point were also
II

Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, and possibly also Sind, AH 1238 (AD 1822–3) and Ramadan 1239 (May–June 1824)

The illumination and binding of this Iranian Qur'an were commissioned for the Talpur ruler Mir Karam'ali Khan. It is one of the rare cases where the names of both the illuminator and the bookbinder are given. The latest colophon on folio 25b is written in riqa', in clouds reserved against plain gold, and states that the ornamentation (tamsiq, read tamtsiq) of this 'Glorious Book' was undertaken at the orders of Mir Karam'ali Khan (sic) Talpur, and that Muhammad Kazim undertook its illumination; Aqa Sayyid Hasan completed its binding (dasturi ... pa'tzā-yi 'ubrāzāb) in Ramadan 1239 (May–June 1824). Muhammad Kazim may have been a Talpur court painter copying the Iranian manner. The occurrence of the name Mir Murad 'Ali, written in a minute hand in the margin of folio 31r, raises the question why Mir Karam'ali is named as the patron in the colophon, particularly since both Mirs were alive at the time this Qur'an was completed. If it was not a mistake on the part of the scribe, one possible explanation might be that although Murad 'Ali Khan ordered the manuscript, Karam'ali Khan was the senior Mir and his name took precedence.

The manuscript opens with an illuminated double-page spread (folios 1b–2a) listing the surahs of the Qur'an in eight-pointed stars, with the titles in red or blue riqa' alternately and then covered with a thin wash of silver or gold respectively. This is different from the common practice of writing over a gold or silver ground. The interstices bear cruciform posies in polychrome on a lapis-blue ground. The margins are decorated with scrolling lotus flowers and feathery leaves in gold, outlined in black with touches of colour, on an uncoloured ground. This is followed by another illuminated spread (folios 2b–3a), with lobed lozenge-shaped medallions and pendants containing a prayer to be recited on commencing the Qur'an in gold on a lapis-blue ground. Unlike contemporary copies, this one gives no Persian instructions. The field of burnished gold is illuminated with spiral florets scrolls and has zigzag borders on a lapis-blue ground decorated with floret scrolls in polychrome. The margins are similar to those of the previous pages.

The main text begins on folios 3b–4a, which are illuminated mainly in lapis-blue, cherry-red and gold, with elaborate head-pieces and polychrome cartouche borders. The text, written in naskh global reserves against plain gold (partly missing on folio 4a), has a narrow band between each line with the Persian translation in clear shikastah in red. Surah titles here, as in the rest of the manuscript, are in gold riqa' on red or lapis-blue cartouches set in illuminated panels in gold and polychrome above and below. No reading instructions are given. Many pages bear marginal notes in Persian, which include traditions concerning the virtues of reciting each surah in shikastah, and commentaries in naskh, in medallions, many of them in the form of rose-water sprinklers or vases with gold outlines and interlinear gold patches (missing in a few places, including folio 23r). On folio 24b, for example, the arrangement of the marginal notes shows that those in shikastah were written before those in naskh. A full Persian commentary on the surah 'Ā'īf (xii) is given in the margins on folios 97–104 and continues into the margins of the following surah. Reflecting the commentator's Shi'i sympathies, it explains that the surah was revealed to the Prophet to console him after Gabriel had informed him of the fate of Hassan and Husayn. It is written in naskh in clouds reserved against gold, and covers the entire area between the inner and outer ruling. The marginal naskh commentary may have been added in Sind by a scribe of Iranian origin. A short colophon at the end of the commentary (folio 250a) reads: 'The servant (of God), Ahmad al-Najaf Abadi 1238 [AD 1822–3].'

Text divisions are in gold riqa' in illuminated lozenges and pointed lotus-medallions with finials. Folio 6a was left unfinished and shows how the colours were applied over the gold ground. The original instructions for the text divisions are given in abbreviated form in a thickish hand by an Iranian scribe: because the beginning of ju'z' 30 was not
indicated, there is no illuminated cartouche marking it. Later instructions deal with the marginal commentaries in naskh, and are written in a fine hand. Numerous marginal instructions in a minute hand, to the scribe or to the illuminator, are visible throughout.

The Iranian lacquered covers, which closely resemble those of cat. 5 and 7, are in a good state of preservation. They are decorated with flowers on a mustard-yellow ground in the central panel, and a band of small flowers and leaves on a red ground in the margins, with gold illuminated bands as borders. The doublures show medallions of flowers on a black ground, set on a field of gold grapevine, flower-heads and tendrils on a red ground bordered with black bands filled with coloured dots or florets. To judge from the poor state of the bindings of other Talpur Qur’ans, these covers were probably added later and are not original to the manuscript.
Tulpar Qur’an

11 folio 74h
12

Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, Shiraz, Rajab 1239 (March 1824), AH 1239 (AD 1823-4) and AH 1240 (AD 1824-5)

This Qur'an is one of the most interesting Talpur Qur'ans in the Collection. It was copied by a renowned Iranian scribe who was responsible not only for the main text in naskh, but also for the interrogative translation in red nastaliq, as well as the marginal notes in sikhaastah. Three colophons, an ownership note and three different styles of illumination reveal its history.

The manuscript is an early work of Muhammad Shafii. He acquired his famous pen-name, Visal, after AH 1239 (AD 1823-4) and this is the second recorded work, and his first copy of the Qur'an, in which he used it. The main text and the commentaries conclude with colophons, three in all. The main text is dated Rajab 1239 (March 1824); the first colophon of the commentaries (folio 238a) gives the date AH 1239 (AD 1823-4), which is followed by a colophon on folio 239a that is signed: "Written by the broken hand of Mirza Kuchah Shirazi pen-named Visal, in the year 1240 [AD 1824-5] of the Prophet's migration."

This third colophon mentions the name Mir Karamali Khan and was obviously added after the Qur'an had been acquired for the Mir, at which point only the first few pages (folios 1b-4a) had been illuminated: this work, by a Shirazi illuminator, is of fine quality, though faded and unburnished. In particular, shading was achieved by the application of thin washes in different tones. The opening double-page spread (folios 1b-2a) has central panels set in dense undulating foliate scroll borders. The panels each contain a medallion with pendants, and corner-pieces, all decorated to playfully drawn foliate scrolls and flowers in gold, blue and red. The medallions bear the prayer to be recited on opening the Qur'an written in naskh, in blue with only the first two lines over-painted with gold, with spiral palmette scrolls of cherry-red on an uncoloured ground. The gold and polychrome scrollwork of the borders is a more delicate version of this ornament. The main text begins on folios 2b-3a, with illumination in tones of gold, blue and cherry-red.

These pages are designed with an elaborate head-piece surmounting a rectangular text panel, with the surah titles and the verse counts in oblong panels above and verses 79 and 80 of the surah al-Waqi'ah (161) below. The borders consist of an undulating scroll with heart-shaped cartouches, alternately upright and inverted.

The remainder of the illumination (except for folios 23b-239a) is probably the work of two illuminators: a mediocre Iranian illuminator, who painted the text divisions (this is evident on folio 67a, where Visal's commentary is broken up because of a text division marker), and the rest by perhaps a Sindhi illuminator who attempted to copy the Shirazi illumination of folios 35-42 without much success. The margins are decorated with shiny gold foliate and floral scrolls outlined in black on an uncoloured ground with touches of vivid colours. The same pattern — of alternating cartouches and stylized flowers and feathery motifs — is consistently used, and may have been applied by stencils, though the result lacks the crispness of stencilled decoration. The format is rigid, and strict that on those pages with marginal commentaries only parts of the cartouches appear (for example, folios 46b, 742, 799b, 81a, 84a, 216a). New patterns are introduced to mark the beginning of each juz'. A small lozenge-shaped cartouche painted in gold and lapis-blue at the centre of the upper and lower margins seems to have been stamped before colours were applied, for it creates bulges throughout the manuscript (a similar practice is noticeable in cat.10). The illuminator was also unsaturated and unfamiliar with the text. On folios 172b-178a, where the indication to mark bizz was mistakenly given twice within six lines, he provided two cartouches. At some point the word *al-bizz (reduplicated*) was written in earmine in the first of them (folio 172b). The crude workmanship of the illumination and a number of mistakes in spelling and in the marking of the text divisions are also noticeable (for example, on folios 31b, 39a, 46b, 51a, 134b *al-juz’* is written instead of *bizz*). This is partly...
also noticeable in cat. 9, and must result from climatic damage in Sind. A similar effect is seen on the lacquer covers.

4. A Qur'an sold at Christie's (London, 21 April 1998, lot 35) bore a note by Shahdad recording that it had originally belonged to his grandfather Mir Mural Ali Khan, and was later seized by the British. Mir Shahdad bought it from the British in Calcutta. He added his name as the owner in 1816 (AD 1849–50). Based on the evidence of the above note, other Qur'ans may have been bought by him rather than return.


6. This allowance was over and above that granted to Visal by Fath Ali Shah.

7. Habib-Abadi 1337, p. 64.

8. For his naskh, see Bayani 1345, pl. 11, pp. 75–76; 17, pp. 165–7; Fussat al-Dawlah 1362, p. 35; Habib-Abadi 1337, pp. 61–66; Rafi’i Mehrabad 1341, pp. 169–73; Bayani 1336, nos. 35 and 36, pp. 12–13; Bahrami & Bayani 1319, nos. 117, 133, 140, 144, 145, 151, 218; Ataiy 1319, nos. 197.

9. A Qur’an sold at Sotheby’s, London, 14 April 1994, lot 120, which he signed as Muhammad Shafi’i, was his 36th copy and is dated AH 1254 (AD 1838). This is his earliest recorded manuscript, and yet shows that he had already copied 35 other Qur’ans.


12. The result of the way the illuminations were done, in that colours were applied over the line drawings.

The final spread (folios 239b–240a) is in a curiously eclectic style and colouring, and is likely to be the work of a Sindi illuminator in Hyderabad (see pp. 36–7). The text is surrounded by a band of lobed cartouches in tones of gold and red on a deep blue ground with scrolls and florrets. The cartouches enclose crudely drawn squares, rectangles and octagons, decorated with flowers on a plain gold ground. The margins are decorated with quadrupartite cartouches of different sizes, painted in blue, orange, red and gold, on a ground of foliate and floral undulating scrolls, in gold outlined in black with touches of polychrome on an uncoloured ground.

The Qur’anic text itself is set in ruled panels of gold and crimson, with the lines of naskh, on a ground of gold paint, alternating with narrow bands of red nastaliq with the interlinear Persian translation on a ground of gold scrolls. Catchwords are in nastakh. Text divisions are written in gold on a blue ground in heart-shaped cartouches or in stylized lotus medallions with illuminated carnarve surroundings. The ground of the text divisions was filled in by the illuminator after the medallions had been inscribed, with the result that the hand appears shaky. Occasionally the number of the section is given in gold numerals outside the outer ruling (for example, folios 117a, 123b and 164a). Surah titles are in carnarve red on plain gold in pointed cartouches with end-pieces in gold and polychrome. Some margins bear traces of instructions to the illuminator or the scribe in a minute hand. The marginal texts, in shabasta arranged in vertical cartouches framed with tiny gold leaves, include commentaries according to various Shi’i sources, in black, with the Qur’anic references in carmine. In a few places — folio 1174a, for example — they are written upside down.

The main text ends (folio 238a) with a short prayer, followed by a colophon in which ‘Muhammad Shafi’, known as Mirza Kuchak, son of the deceased Mirza Muhammad Isma’ili, states that he had the honour of copying the Qur’an in Rabat 1239 (March 1824). There follows a prayer to be said on concluding the Qur’an and a third colophon (folio 239a), in which Visal states that the Qur’an was copied by him for Mir Karanali Khan Bahadur Talpur in AH 1240 (AD 1824–5). Mir Shahdad wrote his note of ownership at the end of Visal’s colophon.

After the death of Mir Nur Muhammad in Shivrwal 1236 (December 1840), this Qur’an was used to record the recognition of his eldest son, Mir Shahdad as rightful heir by other members of the family. The pledge, which is dated 24 Shaban 1237 (5 October 1841), was written twice, the texts being virtually identical: once in the name of Mir Muhammad Nasir, an uncle of Shahdad (folio 14), and once in that of Mir Muhammad, a son of Ghulam Ali Khan (folio 21b). Each witnessed it in his own hand and put his seal to it. The former was attested by the two sons of Mir Muhammad Nasir, ‘Abdul Ali and Hasan Ali, in similar terms with their seals. The Qur’an, being the legal guarantee of their oath, remained in the possession of Mir Shahdad, who added a note of ownership (folio 239a) dated AH 1245 (AD 1828–9), most probably when he was in Calcutta. Since the British had confiscated the property of the Talpurs, it is not certain whether this Qur’an remained with him, or whether it was returned to him on his acquittal and release from prison (see pp. 35–6). The use of the Qur’an to record oaths is known from Iran, but under the Talpurs both the British and the Talpurs themselves had frequent recourse to it. As Sir Richard Burton remarked, ‘An oath taken upon the Koran was considered decisive, as it is supposed that the Deity would certainly punish the perjurer. The result was that the educated classes acted upon the principle, “Certe lenta ira Deorum est” (“The wrath of the Gods is certainly slow”).’
The lacquered covers, bound upside down, are decorated with flower motifs but are in very poor condition, most probably damaged by the climate of Sind. Despite their present appearance, however, they were painted by a competent Shirazi lacquer painter. The doublures are decorated with a vine twining round a tree, painted in gold on a plain black ground. The borders are decorated with repeating blossoms, also in gold. The covers, like those of cat.9, show traces of crude restoration, very probably by the same restorer.

Muhammad Shaf’i, son of Muhammad Ismail, known as Mirza Kuchak, pen-named Visal, was one of the most famous calligraphers, scholars and poets of 19th-century Iran. Born in AH 1219 (AD 1803), he lost his parents as a child and was brought up by his maternal uncle Mirza Abdullah, who was a Qur’an copyist and taught him the art of calligraphy. His pen-name was at first Mahjur (‘separated’, or perhaps ‘forsaken’), but after he encountered Mirza Suleyman in AH 1239 (AD 1823–4), he changed it to Visal (‘being united’). According to his son Abu’l-Qasim Farhang, Visal earned his living by copying the Qur’an. He went blind for a year, was operated on and took up calligraphy again, but shortly afterwards went blind for good. He died in AH 1262 (AD 1846) and was buried in Shiraz.

In Rabi’ al-Awwal 1260 (March–April 1844), the year before his death, Visal, addressed as ‘the master of the seven styles’, was granted an annual allowance of 500 ʿamātān in cash from the revenues of the province of Fars by Muhammad Shah. By the time of his firman, however, Visal can no longer have been active. Two years later, in Rabi’ al-Awwal 1261 (February–March 1847), a firman transferred the allowance to his sons, to be divided equally between them.

In addition to his poetry, his biographers commend his knowledge of music, singing, mathematics, painting and other crafts, the occult sciences and grammar. He was the author of numerous works, in both verse and prose. He wrote all calligraphic hands, in inks of different colours, and illuminated and painted manuscripts himself. Visal taught many pupils shikastah and nastālīq, but his nastālīq in the style of Neyrizi was particularly prized, and admirers would pay a high price for a single line written by him. It is recorded that he copied the Qur’an 67 times, as well as 700 prayer books and the dhikrāt of various poets. His recorded nastālīq works are dated between AH 1214 (AD 1898) and AH 1260 (AD 1844). Those in the Khalili Collection are a copy of Zad al-mas’ūd, two calligraphic pages, and possibly a Qur’an (cat.22). Also in the Collection is a book of prayers signed by him, in nastālīq.
The Talpur Mirs of Sind
According to the colophon, this codex is one of the many manuscripts commissioned as part of an order for use in the newly built Shah Mosque in the capital Tehran. A long colophon (folios 244a–b) written in riqa' includes reserved against gold states that Haji Muhammad 'Ali Himmini Tehran, who is in the service of Aqa Mir Muhammad Mahdi (his name written in gold), the Imam Jum'a of the capital, asked for Qur'ans, collections of hadith and other works to be copied, and the present Qur'an is one of these. The patron Haji Muhammad 'Ali Himmini Tehran has not been identified, but was clearly an associate of the Imam Jum'a, and most probably a cleric. Aqa Mir Muhammad Mahdi Isfahani (AH 1206–1267/AD 1793–1847), however, was one of the sayyids of Khurram Abad. After the completion of the Shah Mosque, the precious donations made by Fath'Ali Shah were so lavish that he called Muhammad Mahdi to Tehran from Isfahan and put him in charge of them, making him the Imam Jum'a of Tehran in AH 1236 (AD 1820–21). He held this post for nearly 27 years, until his death. He wrote a commentary on the Nahj al-balagha in Persian.

The scribe signs himself as 'the weak servant of God', the least of scribes Fath'Ali', who asks readers to pray for the scribe and the patron, and gives the date as the year AH 1243 (AD 1827–8). No nasb scribe of the name Fath'Ali is recorded, but the scribe of this Qur'an is more likely to have been one of the clerics employed at the Shah Mosque.

The manuscript opens with a double page of illumination in gold, lapis-blue and cherry-red, with striking head-pieces filled with scrolling arabesques and margins filled with continuous cartouches on cherry-red dark blue grounds (folios 1b–2a). These two pages bear surah al-Fatiha (1) and the beginning of surah al-Banis (11), written in clouds reserved against gold. Catchwords are in nastaliq. Text divisions are marked by illuminated devices of various shapes with finials. Surah titles are on plain gold cartouches in red riqa' framed in illuminated panels in blue, gold and red, or in blue and gold only (for example, folios 102a, 166b) or are left without coloured illumination (folios 21b, 24b). Traditions concerning the virtues of reading each surah according to various Shi'i sources are written in the margins in shikastah in vertical cartouches in clouds reserved against gold, with foliate finials. Many of them are dated, indicating that the scribe wrote the marginal notes at different times: most of those at the end, as well as folios 61a and 124a are dated AH 1252 (AD 1836–7), while others, such as folios 118a, 174b, 177a, 182a and 187b are dated AH 1253 (AD 1837–8). Surah titles are written in red riqa' at the top left-hand corner of the 'a' folios. These were added after the marginal notes, since in one case the title had to be written closer to the centre of the margin (folio 217a).

Marginal devices with finials mark ju'af, hajju'af, kish and sajdah throughout. They are all written in red riqa' on gold, with modest highlights in colours. The colophon is followed by ten different prayers (folios 246b–250b) separated by directions in Persian in red riqa'. These are followed by a description in Persian of the virtues of reciting them (folios 250b–251a), and by yet another prayer. A short Persian instruction for using the Qur'an for istikhbara according to the method of Ibn Tawus ends the manuscript (folios 252a and 252b). Folios 253a–254a are ruled but left blank, as is folio 1a.

The lacquered covers depict various flowering plants on a horizontal axis on a brown ground, and bordered with a narrow band of gold leaves. The horizontal depiction is possibly a revival of an earlier tradition, as seen on a contemporary lacquer binding by Lutf'Ali Shirazi. The doublures depict narcissi and small ranunculi on a red ground.
commissioned for the treasury of the royal palace in Tehran. A long inscription that Haji Mohammad Mahdi wrote on the covers of the manuscript collections during this period indicates that the manuscript was clearly commissioned for the treasury of the royal palace in Tehran. However, the manuscript was later sold to the British Museum in the 19th century (1830–21). He adds that on the Nahj al-bals, a work attributed to the 13th-century Persian poet Firdawsi, the margins are filled with blue and gold. These two pages are written in clouds, marked by illuminated cartouches in red and gold and gold foregrounds. The marginal notes are dated 1594, and the corner of the manuscript is dated 1587. They are written in Persian and contain a colophon inscribed in Persian script. The manuscript includes 12 leaves, and the colophon is inscribed in Persian script. The manuscript is decorated with floral designs in red and gold. The front cover of the manuscript is decorated with a floral design in red and gold.
This is another specially commissioned Qur'an of the first half of the 19th century. Unlike the patrons of previous examples, however, who were theologians or merchants, the patron of this Qur'an was a musta'mil ('pay master') of Shiraz called Mirza'Abid, who commissioned it for his son Mirza Muhammad Riza. He may be the same as Mirza Muhammad Riza Mustawfi who was summoned from Shiraz to Tehran in AH 1279 (AD 1863), together with the governor, Mu'ayyid al-Dawlah, and other officials before the appointment of Zill al-Sultan.1 An unusual feature of this Qur'an is the absence of reading marks, traditions and commentary, or of iztekhabah indications.

The manuscript opens with a double-page spread of illumination (folios 1b–2a). The central panel contains the index to the Qur'an written alternately in blue and red riq'at in plain gold squares. The narrow bands separating the squares are decorated with gold flowers on a red or green ground. The borders are illuminated with repeating lotus scrolls and leaves in gold outlined in black with touches of colour on an uncoloured ground. These are followed by another double page of illumination on folios 2b–3a. Here, the central panels contain lobed medallions and pendants in which the prayer to be recited on commencing the Qur'an is written in naskh on a plain gold ground. The corner-pieces are decorated with arabesques and flowers in gold and polychrome. The field between these and the marginals is decorated with scrolling flowers and leaves in gold outlined in black with touches of colour. The borders resemble those of the preceding pages. The main text also starts on a double-page spread of extensive polychrome illumination (folios 3b–4a). Unlike cat.13, copied in Tehran, where only three colours (gold, red and blue) were used in the illumination, this Qur'an seems to include the whole spectrum. The margins of the following pages (folios 4b–5a) are similar to those of folios 2b–3a, except that the lotus blossoms are even more vividly polychrome, and cartouches are employed. Fine blue and red tassel-like motifs decorate the outer borders of all these pages. The text is written in clouds, reserved against gold throughout. Catchwords are in naskh. Text divisions are marked mainly by illuminated squat pear-shaped devices, except for the ju'a', which are marked by octagonal devices. These are in gold riq'at on a mid-blue ground decorated with gold scrolls, framed in a band of repeating blossoms in gold on a red ground, and bordered with flame-like motifs in gold, highlighted in colours. Surah titles are in gold riq'at on mid-blue cartouches, decorated with gold scrolls and set in illuminated panels in gold and polychrome. The Qur'an text is followed by two short prayers.

The colophon on folios 139b–140a states that Mirza'Abid Mustawfi Shirazi had the Qur'an copied for his son, Mirza Riza, and gives the name of the scribe, 'Ali'Askar ibn Muhammad Shafi' al-Arsanjani (the scribe of cat. 28). Fursat al-Dawlah Shirazi in Ashar-i 'Ajam, describing Arsanjan— a town east of Shiraz— and its local worthies, includes 'Ali'Askar among its mystics: 'The deceased Mulla'Ali'Askar was one of the celebrated mystics, and warriors of faith (majalid) ... his naskh was better than that of his predecessors.2 'Ali'Askar had a long working life and died in AH 1353 (AD 1867–8); he was buried at Arsanjan. Cat. 14 is one of his earliest works, and although Fursat al-Dawlah commends him as a mystic, he must also have been a celebrated calligrapher to receive commissions from a Qajar prince and other noblemen. He wrote naskh following 'Ala al-Din Tahirzad,3 and his signed pieces show that he was also a master of riqa' and shikastah. He had two sons, both recorded as calligraphers: Muhammad Shafi' and Husayn, who was also a naskh scribe and copied a Qur'an in AH 1285 (AD 1868–9).4

Apart from cat.14 the Khalili Collection also possesses three calligraphic pages by 'Ali'Askar —two dated AH 1287 (AD 1870–71)5 and the third (cat. 383, unpublished) dated AH 1292 (AD 1875–6) — and the Subtab al-kamilah (MS 386). According to the colophon of
10th century. Officials before the absence of read-

The role and red qiyā' attributed with gold painting lotus scrolls ground.

Here, the al- looks between gold outlined time pages. The illumination 5 (gold, red and hole spectrum). If folios 28–32, tawtawechoes are not of all these pages. are in nastaʿliq, except for ' on a mid-blue forms in gold on a in colours. Surah 119 and set in illus.
two short prayers. Shirazi had the
\'Ali Askar ibn Shirazi in Abūrri, includes 'Ali's celebrated mystics, predecessors.23

Buried at Arsanjan, he sold some manuscripts from Din Tahirizi, and He had two sons, was also a naskh

The page dated AH 1292 (AD 1875–6). 'Ali Askar was commissioned by Abu'l-Hasan, Mushir al-Mulk II, the governor of Fars (also the patron of cat. 28) to complete the Sahifah Sajjadiyyah which had been copied by Ahmad Nayarzi in AH 1128 (AD 1725–6). The Nayarzi colophon (folios 124b–125a) states that he copied it from a copy by Yaquṭ al-Musta‘imī, who had copied it from the author's copy, kept in the Safavid royal library. Apart from adding the missing parts 'Ali Askar added other prayers, which he lists in the colophon.

Ali Askar's other recorded works include seven copies of the Qur'an, mostly commissioned by Qajar princes and high officials, calligraphic pages and more prayer books dated between AH 1248 (AD 1832–3) and AH 1292 (AD 1875–6). The high quality of both the writing and illumination in cat. 14 is indicative of his status as a celebrated calligrapher, although the even higher quality of cat. 28 by his son shows that the latter was better still.

The lacquered covers depict a single bird perched on a rose bush, with carnations, hyacinths and small flowers below and a butterfly beneath the bird on a gold-sprinkled (marquash) ground, bordered with a band of gold illumination on a black ground. The same combination is seen earlier on the front of a mirror case in the Khāli Collection made in Shiraz circa 1809, a theme that was repeated later. The gold-decorated doublures depict a sleeping bird on the bent branch of a flowering plant on a black ground, bordered with a narrow band of scrolling roses and leaves on a red ground. The gold illumination of the doublures is particularly fine, and the sleeping bird on a branch that is about to break is a striking conceit.

The painter has signed the covers wa amr al-mu'minin ('O Commander of the Faithful'), with the date AH 1257 (AD 1841–2). A pen-box in the Khāli Collection dated AH 1242 (AD 1826–7) also bears this signature.24 Both items belong to the Fārā'ī Shah period.

The use of this invocation as signature is attributed to Muhammad 'Ali, a painter of Shiraz, by both Karimzadeh and Boroumand.25 The only historical reference to this painter is in Farsat al-Dawlah, who states: 'the late Muhammad 'Ali attained the highest degree of excellence in depicting flowers. He died in AH 1285 [AD 1868–9], and was buried in Dar al-Salām (Shiraz).26 Two other pieces are recorded by Karimzadeh, dated AH 1280 (AD 1864–5) and AH 1284 (AD 1868–9).27 If these are by the same painter as the covers of this Qur'an, which are so far the earliest dated piece by Muhammad 'Ali, he must have had a long working life. A double mirror case in the collection is signed Muhammad 'Ali.'28 His son Aqa Muhammad Hasany is also mentioned as a painter of flowers, and as an occasional poet with the pen-name Naqqāsh ('Painter').29 The covers pre-date the completion of this copy of the Qur'an, but even if they were not originally intended for this manuscript, the scribe and the painter were both Shirazi and contemporaries.
Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, Azerbaijan 10–19 Ramadan 1254 (27 November–6 December 1838)

The manuscript opens with the main text arranged in a double-page spread of illumination (folios 1b–2a), predominantly in gold and blue, with bold head-pieces and double zigzag borders, all densely filled with floral scrolls. The main text is written in clouds reserved against plain gold throughout, with interlinear Persian translation. Catchwords are in nasta’liq, and, unusually, some of them are also given their Persian translation in red nasta’liq. The marginal texts include both commentaries on the surahs and the virtues of reciting them according to Shi’i Imams, and are written in nasta’liq of mediocre quality, except for their Arabic headings, which are written in red nasta’liq. Gold is used to frame the texts, in the most varied shapes, and the commentaries are written vertically, horizontally, diagonally and even upside down. Instructions to the scribe as to where the commentaries are to go appear outside the karnamad in a casual hand. Another peculiarity of this Qur’an is that most of the commentaries end with a reference to the source, for example, ‘Hadi’, ‘Aqa Hadi’, ‘Minbaj’, ‘Kholasat al-minbaj’, ‘Tarjumah-zi Salamaty’, ‘Tajall’, ‘Ibrahim’ and ‘Muntakhab’. Other peculiarities are: the omission of prayers to be recited before or after reading the Qur’an, and the absence of an index and istikhabat indications. The arrangement and content of the colophon, and even the covers, also differ markedly from contemporary Iranian copies of the Qur’an.

Text divisions are written in gold riga’i outlined in black on a red or a green ground decorated with gold scrollwork, and framed by a blue or red band with white crosses. This in turn is bordered with gold flame-like motifs, with polychrome highlights. Elaborate finalis, finely illuminated in gold and polychrome, complete these devices. Surah titles are in gold riga’i on lapis-blue cartouches decorated with gold scrolls and leaves, set in an illuminated panel in gold and polychrome in the same style as the opening pages. The title of each surah appears in red riga’i at the top left-hand corner of the ‘a’ folios.

The common practice in writing a colophon is to begin by stating that the manuscript was finished by the order of a named patron, followed by the name of the scribe and then the date. Any mention of how many other Qur’ans the scribe has copied is often separate from the main text of the colophon, as in an earlier Qur’an in the Khalili Collection. This colophon (folios 43b–43a) is different. The scribe begins with the statement that this is his 31st copy of the Qur’an, and he beseeches God to enable him to complete a further 100 copies. He then introduces himself and gives the date, which is cited in an enigmatic form (see p.28)—evidently a favourite habit of his, since he gives it similarly in another colophon—followed by extravagant laudatory epithets for the patron, and then by the patron’s name and prayers for him.

The name of the patron, Manuchehr Khan, was written in gold, but it has been concealed by a later cartouche of plain gold; the name can be read when the page is held up to the light or viewed in a raking light. Manuchehr Khan was an Armenian eunuch, who was actually known as Gurji (the ‘Georgian’). He was from Tiflis and was taken into captivity by Sultan Muhammad Shah in AH 1259 (AD 1744–5). An important official under Fath’ al-Shah and Muhammad Shah, he held various court posts, including that of Grand Chamberlain, before being appointed deputy governor of Gilan in AH 1259 (AD 1833–4). He was subsequently appointed Vizier of Isfahan in AH 1260 (AD 1842–3) and commanded the army against the Russians on the Caspian in AH 1264 (AD 1847–8). He was sent to Turkmenbaki to sign the peace treaty in AH 1245 (AD 1827–8), and the following year was granted the title of Mu’tamid al-Dawlah. He was sent to subdue Farmanfarma and Shuja’ al-Saltanah in Fars, and in AH 1251 (AD 1835–6) was made the deputy governor of the province. The following year he was appointed governor of Kirmanshah, Luristan and Khuzistan, and then in AH 1254 (AD 1838–9) governor of Isfahan, a post he held together with the governorship of Luristan.
and Khuzistan until his death in AH 1265 (AD 1846–7). He also founded a printing press in Tehran called the Chop-i Mutamid. This Qur'an would have reached him when he was in Isfahan, but by this date he held the title Mutamid al-Dawlah, so it is odd that this does not appear in the colophon, and odder still that his name was erased. This might be an indication that although this Qur'an was originally intended for him, it never reached him.

The scribe, Muhammad Shafi, was the son of Muhammad Ali, and had a son named after his grandfather, who was also a scribe. He is described by Bayani as a first-class Tabrizi calligrapher whose mastery in writing had no equal among his contemporaries. His other recorded works are dated between AH 1217 (AD 1852–3) and 1263 (AD 1845–6). All of these are religious works, as is the text of a calligraphic specimen in the Khaliqi Collection (CAL 261, ex-catalogue).

Two other copies of the Qur'an by Muhammad Shafi are recorded, one commissioned by Husayn Khan Ajudan Bashi, whose name is also written in gold; it has marginal commentaries by 'Abd al-Husayn Isfahani, who also wrote the marginal commentaries to a Safavid Qur'an in the Khaliqi Collection. The colophon of the Qur'an for Ajudan Bashi, which is dated AH 1232 (AD 1875), is almost identical to that of cat.15, particularly in the terms used and the form of the date. The other Qur'an is in the Islamic Museum in Tehran (1869), dated AH 1321 (AD 1875–6), and here he signs himself in a similar manner to cat.15. The colophon of the marginal texts states that the scribe 'Abdullah Isfahani wrote some of them, as well as some of the interlinear translations, and that he wrote them in Isfahan in AH 1253 (AD 1857–8). Muhammad Shafi signed cat.15, the Qur'an in Tehran, two other manuscripts and the calligraphic page in the Khaliqi Collection, as ghurub al-zawwan ('living away from his homeland'), but he makes no mention of his whereabouts. The dates of these suggest that he was away from Tabriz on at least four different occasions — in the years AH 1321 (AD 1855–6), AH 1324 (AD 1858), AH 1326–7 (AD 1860–1) and AH 1328 (AD 1862–3) — and the second AH 1229 (AD 1863–4). According to a later note by 'Abd al-Ghaffar Tabrizi, the nasta'liq scribe, the manuscript was acquired by Mirza Sa'id Khan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, in AH 1327 (AD 1862–3). In this note, 'Abd al-Ghaffar praises the prayer book and the writing of the late Muhammad Shafi. In the two colophons Muhammad Shafi signs himself in the manner of Ahmad Nayrizi.

The covers are decorated with a delicate floral pattern that includes long, feathery leaves executed in colours and gold on a buff ground. The double borders consist of one band with a floral design on a green ground and another, narrower band with a repeating diaper on a black ground. The double borders are red, with an overall floral scroll pattern in black outlined in gold and a border of gold scrollwork on a black ground.
Single-volume Qur’an
Iran, mid-19th century

This copy of the Qur’an written in neat naskh lacks the index and the prayers on commencing or finishing a reading that are found in most Qajar copies but it includes abbreviated forms for division.

The manuscript opens with surah al-Fatihah (1) and the beginning of surah al-Baqara (2) on a double-page spread of illumination, mainly in gold and lapis-blue with touches of red, green and purple (folios 1b–2a). Gold devices outlined in red, gold and black rules at the top corners of each page mark the title of the surah on the ‘a’ folios and the abbreviated forms for sīrāḥsūb on the ‘b’ folios. Text divisions are in illuminated red or lapis-blue cartouches, bordered with gold flame-like motifs and finials. Surah titles are in gold riqa’ on gold, red or lapis-blue cartouches decorated with gold scrolls. When gold cartouches are used, the titles and scrolls are outlined in black. These cartouches are set in illuminated panels in gold and polychrome. Catchwords are in riqa’. The last folio (268) is copied on a different paper.

The covers are black shagreen (ṣāgbūr) with tooled inset decoration in red, a somewhat oxidized green, and gold. The border cartouches are decorated with floral and foliate motifs, while the central medallion and the pendants bear an inscription stating that it was commissioned by the ‘sultan of theologians’, with an invocation to Muhammad (which was also his own name) and the date AH 1280 (AD 1865–6). Gold tassel-like motifs decorate the inner border of the central panel and edge the central cartouches. The doublures are of mustard-yellow leather with traces of gold rulings and corner decorations.

A Qur’an sold at Sotheby’s was commissioned by the same patron, Mirza Sayyid Muhammad Sultan al-‘alamā’, and copied by the well-known Isfahani scribe Ghulam’ali (d. AH 1269/AD 1853–3) in AH 1265 (AD 1849). The name of the patron in illuminated cartouches in the margins shows him to have been of high theological rank but, surprisingly, he is not recorded in the sources. There were two theologians with the title Sultan al-‘alamā during the reign of Nasir al-Din Shah, but neither with the name Muhammad.
prayers on
The Muhammad Shah period

11 surah al-Baqara
blue with touches
gold and black rules
and the abbreviated
red or lapis-blue
tables are in gold 'riqa'
set in illuminated
cartouches
(266) is copied on
in red, a somewhat
calligraphic and foliate
user stating that it was
Muhammad (which was
in illuminated car-
but, surprisingly,
title Sultan
name Muhammad.3
Divination has a long history in the Middle East, particularly in Iran, where it was practised as early as the 6th century BC, as reported by Herodotus. Various practices to foretell the future have been used since in the Islamic world and numerous works have been published on divination. In addition to bibliomancy (fatḥa-šahāb), Emily Savage-Smith discusses horoscopes, geomancy, the use of geomantic dice and fort-casting, among other methods. I. Afshar cites astrology (Ihm al-najam), ornithomancy (ratapoyr), scapulomancy or omphaloscopy (Ihm al-aktef), as well as bibliomancy. Under bibliomancy, he lists the Qur’an and the Divān of Hafiz, but he does not explain how they should be used, even though there are ample references on their widespread use in Iran, not only among the public but by rulers and theologians as well.

Although the use of the Qur’an for divination met with opposition from theologians, as early as the 10th century AD works on the subject and widespread practice testify to its continuous use, particularly in Shi’i Iran. One of the early references is in the Tarīkh-i Bayhaq, which was composed in 401 (AD 1010–11). In his biography of a dāʿir (secretary) of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, Ibn Funda, includes a citation from a certain Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Salimi, who in the year 401 (AD 1010–11) said: “If you wish to take a fāl from the Qur’an, read surah al-Ikhlās (112) three times, or else the mantuṣibatayn,” followed by the al-Fāṭihah (1) once, then ask for your fāl.” When Makin al-Din Qumi, later known as Muhayyid al-Din, opened the Qur’an for fāl, the first line on the first page was “wa al-sawm li-dunya makhtu amrit” (surah Yūsuf, 111, part of verse 54: “Be assured this day, thou art, before our own Presence, with rank firmly established, and felicity fully proved!”). He was comforted by these words, and a few days later was appointed Royal Chancellor (bāṣīr-i inšāh) to the Abbassid caliph al-Nasir (AH 475–622/AD 1080–1225). Shams al-Din Juvayni took tafsīr al-Qur’an from the Qur’an before his execution (on 4 Shabān 683/16 October 1284), and wrote a will as a result of the outcome.

Shah ‘Abbas (reg. AH 995–1038/AD 1587–1629), who regularly consulted astrologers as well as the ‘ulama’, used either the Qur’an or the Divān of Hafiz on important issues, and is reported sometimes to have consulted both. When neither was available, he used whatever was at hand, such as the R vowat al-fāl. As His Majesty had the habit of not embarking on any affair, however insignificant, without tafsīr and Divine consultation, he performed tafsīr al-Qur’an for this occasion. At the top of the right page was ‘ismu al-lāh al-raḥmān al-raḥim, which was accepted by everyone to be an auspicious sign for commencing his journey. The practice of divination is also reported under the Qajars. Before his campaign against the Russians in AH 1211 (AD 1796), Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar consulted the astrologer Mirza Hasan regarding the ascendant of that year. A couplet in the Rustam al-tawārīkh shows that divination was also a common practice in the early years of Fath ‘Ali Shah’s reign: “Divination is a guide in all affairs/both for kings and naked beggars.” Another is: “Read the verse of consultation from the Glorious Qur’an, O thou who seest the truth.” On leaving Shiraz for Tehran to assume power, Fath ‘Ali Shah halted at the tomb of Hafiz, and asked for his Divān in order to take a fāl, beseeching Hafiz’s spirit to look favourably upon him. He then departed for Tehran.

In his diary Ţtimad al-Saltanah, a close associate of Nasir al-Din Shah, minister, writer and travelator, questioned whether the appointment of ‘Imad al-Dawlah as Minister of Justice in AH 1302 (AD 1884–5) was the result of istikhārāh, deliberation or bribery. Nasir al-Din Shah took an istikhārāh in AH 1305 (AD 1887–8) to decide the best of three candidates for Prime Minister: Qawm al-Dawlah, ‘Adud al-Dawlah or Amin al-Sultan. The result was good for the first two, but bad for Amin al-Sultan, so the final decision was delayed. There is another reference to istikhārāh by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, also in connection with Amin al-Sultan and his return from exile in Qum. The occasion of taking an istikhārāh for Nasir al-Din Shah is clearly described so as to show how the Shah was cheated of the true answer. In the year AH 1300 (AD 1882–3) Nasir al-Din Shah took istikhārāh on whether to depart for Mashhad: the answer was good, so off he went. Nasir al-Din Shah also used istikhārāh daily for mundane issues and a book on various methods of Qur’anic istikhārāh was presented to him by a cleric in AH 1328 (AD 1910–11).
Divination

The widespread resort to istikhārah in the Qur'ān explains why so many Qajar copies contain indications for it. It also meant that directions for istikhārah were added to earlier Qur'āns, and sometimes even to Qur'āns copied outside Iran.21

The history of divination goes back to ḥadīth texts referring to its existence in pre-Islamic Arabia, for the Prophet reportedly had recourse to it.22 Although the Qur'ān lacks specific directions for divination, various verses have been cited to sanction the practice. The verse "With Him are the keys of the Unseen, the treasures that none knoweth but He ..." (surah al-An'ām, 11, verse of verse 59) is often prescribed as a prayer to be recited before embarking on divination by the Qur'ān.23

The terms used for divination in Persian Qur'āns of the 16th to 18th centuries are fāl and its derivatives, while istikhārah is employed in 19th-century Qur'āns. As the terms change, so do the practices. Arabic fāl covers natural omens, such as sneezing, personal peculiarities, names and the spontaneous appearance of things to the sight, hearing or mind, and in particular good omens, such as meeting a Shari'ah. The Prophet is reported to have used fāl in this way and to have approved of it.24 This usage is of some antiquity in Iran, for both Firdawsi in the Shāhnāma and Sa'di in his Tusyīdāt refer to it.25 Dehkhoda describes the taking of an omen (fāl) by opening at random the Qur'an, or classics such as the Dīvān of Hafiz and the Maṣna'vat of Jalal al-Dīn Muhammad Rumi.26

Istikhārah has been defined as a means of escaping from indecision with the help of divine inspiration through a dream (wujūd) or the casting of lots (qur'āb).27 Dehkhoda defines it as seeking or requesting what is good or best. He distinguishes between istikhārah among the Sunnis and the Shi'a. Sunni istikhārah involves special prayers before going to sleep, whether at home or in a holy place; the answer will then be revealed in a dream. Shī'ī istikhārah, on the other hand, is more varied and requires further ritual.28

A Shi'i theologian, Ali ibn Musa ibn Ja'far ibn Tawus ibn al-Hasani (AH 170-656/AD 399-1258), better known as Ibn Tawus, devoted an entire work to the subject of divination in aH 653 (AD 1252-51), the Fath al-ahrāb bayn al-disvār al-ahlāb wa rabb al-arhāb fī'l-istikhārah, commonly known as al-Istikhārah, which is cited extensively in Maleši's Biḥār al-awrār and al-Amillī's Waṣa'il al-sahāb.29 Ibn Tawus recorded various hadīth on istikhārah, all indicating that before embarking on any enterprise, one should not consult anyone until one has consulted God.29

The Biḥār al-awrār, the main source for the Shi'a on religious matters, was compiled by Muhammad Baqr Majlesi known as Allama Mallīsī circa AH 1106 (AD 1694).30 Maleši cites various sources for the use of the Qur'ān in divination, but does not explain the differences between the terms taṣā'ul (taking an omen), qur'āb (lot-casting), fāl (to take an omen) and istikhārah (seeking for guidance), although his explanation of the prohibition of divination by the Qur'ān gives a clue to the difference between fāl and istikhārah in his time. Thus the prohibition lā taṣā'ul bi-l-Qur'ān ("do not use the Qur'ān for fāl") must have been provoked by an unlawful desire to know the future, while istikhārah was permitted.31 In popular religion in Iran, the Qur'an is employed for istikhārah, while secular works like the Dīvān of Hafiz are employed for fāl.

In the section on divination with the Qur'ān, Ibn Tawus uses both qur'āb and fāl and lists methods and procedures, all of which include ablation and recitations of Qur'ānic verses, the talqiyah and various prayers.32 One particular prayer is attributed to the mahdūdī Shīrāzy al-Khābi al-Muntakhibī,33 allāhummā inša taṣā'ul bi-kitābka wa taswīkhulu 'alayka fa-arīn min kitābka mà bhwā al-makhān min sirrīka al-makhān fī ghyābiha '("Oh God, I take omen in Your Book, and put my trust in You, so show me in Your Book what You have concealed of Your mysteries, hidden of your divine secret.' (This prayer is the only one given in Timurid and Safavid Qur'āns.) The prescribed prayer is often followed by: 'In this year and in this month then bring up for us the beginning of a verse from Your book, by which we will be guided' or: 'Bring out a verse for me with which I am guided upon, then order, or upon prohibition, then forbid.' A common prayer, however, is 'O God, if it is in Your judgment and in Your divine decree to reveal to Your friend and Your authority in Your creature in this year and in this month then bring up for us the beginning of a verse from Your book, by which we will be guided.'
Once the prescribed procedures have been recited, the Qur'an is opened. At this stage various instructions are given: 'Count seven folios, and then ten lines of the reverse of the seventh folio (the 'b' folio), look at the eleventh line and that will give you the desired fals'; "Count seven folios, then six lines from the top of the second side (the 'b' folio) of the seventh folio, and take the omen with what is in the seventh line'; "Count seven folios (forward), and count the number of times the word Allah appears on the second side (the 'b' folio) of the seventh folio and the first side (the 'a' folio) of the eighth folio, then count pages according to the number of times the word Allah has occurred, until you end with the number, after which you count the lines according to the number of occurrences of the word Allah, and you will find your omen at the end of that line'; or 'Count eight folios, then count eleven lines from the first side (the 'a' folio) of the eighth folio, and take your omen from the eleventh line'.

Majlisi's Bihār al-‘awāmir includes all the methods given by Ibn Tawus in his section al-‘istikbār wa al-tafa’il bi-l-Qur‘ān al-Majid, and in his additional explanations he reports from other sources on how to beseech God for istikbār (but not fals). His instructions include the recitation of various Qur'anic verses and numerals, a few of which are attributed to Imam Ja'far, before opening the Qur'an at random. The variations are: 'The answer is what first catches the eye', which Majlisi glosses as meaning at the top of the right-hand page (the 'b' folio); 'Open the Qur'an, count the number of times the word Allah appears on the right-hand page (the 'b' folio), then count the same number of folios (forward), and the same number of lines from the left page (the 'a' folio), and the final line will give the answer'; and 'Open the Qur'an and count six folios (forward), and the sixth line of the seventh folio will give the answer.'

Similar instructions for fals are found in the pre-Safavid falsānāmahs but they are in prose. The earliest dated prose versions appear in a Qur'an dated AH 767 (AD 1365) and in a Timurid Qur'an dated AH 838 (AD 1433), copied by a Shirazi scribe during the reign of Shahrukh (rég. AH 807–810/AD 1405–1407). The prose version, as well as those in verse found in 16th-century copies, have many features in common in their procedures. Their instructions are all in Persian and in the cases of verse form, although the content is the same, the verses are not always identical, which may indicate that they were versified, most likely from a Persian prose version, which in turn may have been translated from an Arabic original.

The Persian versified version of the fals in Safavid Qur'ans, which is the only method used, instructs the reader to first perform an ablution, then take a complete copy of the Qur'an, recite the surah al-fātīhab (i) once, and the surah al-ikhlās (cxix) three times, reflect on one's desire, recite the prayer tafa'attu ... (the prayer recommended by al-Mustaghibri and recorded by Ibn Tawus), and then open the Qur'an. The final step may vary: the clue to the answer could be the first letter of the first line, the first letter of the seventh line, the first letter of the seventh line after having counted seven folios, or the seventh letter of the seventh line; all presumably from the 'b' folio. The above instructions are followed by a table of letters, often with illuminated panels in gold and polychrome. Apart from the prayer, which is in Arabic prose, and is usually in naskh or muhaqqaq, the remainder of the falsānāmah is in Persian nasta'īql, except for cat. 3, which is written in Persian riqā'.

The earliest Qur'an in the Khalili Collection to include a falsānāmah is dated AH 952 (AD 1545–6) and was copied by Ruzbihan. The falsānāmah is headed al-tafa'il min kalam Allāh (Divination from The Word of God). In this Qur'an, the first letter of the first line (of the 'b' folio) indicates the answer. An almost identical falsānāmah appears in copies of the Qur'an by another Shirazi scribe, 'Abd al-Qadir Husayni. Other Qur'ans copied by him contain a versified Persian falsānāmah, which may well be the same as the Ruzbihan falsānāmah.

The falsānāmah of yet another Safavid Qur'an in the Khalili Collection (illuminated p.190) comes under a heading of that name, and gives similar instructions up to the opening of the Qur'an; it then prescribes: ablution, the recitation of the surahs al-fātīhab (i) and al-ikhlās (cxix) each three times, the prayer, opening the Qur'an, and the answer is to be found in the first letter of the seventh line of
Divination

Large various instruct-
folio [the 'b' folio],
folios, then six lines
with what is in the
word Alah appears
of the eighth folio,
until you end with
lines of the word
then count eleven
the eleventh line.39
Suggestion al-istikhabah
from other sources
recitation of various
surah, before opening
'it', which Majusi
Qur'an, count the
then count the same
folios], and the final
and the sixth line of
are in prose. The
in the Qur'an dated
877-879/AD 1455-
have many features
uses of verse form,
ondicate that they
then translated from
method used, instructs
instruct, recite the surah
instruct, the prayer
instruct, and then
letter of the first
being counted seven
The above instruct-
polychrome. Apart
'the remainder of
I',
1912 (AD 1515-6)
Alah. ('Divination
folio) indicates the
hirazi scribe, 'Abd
Danah, which may
is dated p.8939 comes
to the Qur'an; it then
by each three times,
the seventh line of
the ‘b’ folio. Interestingly, the final couplet reads: 

\[
\text{bhab-i amr-i shahrubub shah shud tamām / shād hād ānkab bhrənəd tu's-salām} (‘Finished by the order of Shahrukh Shah, may whoever reads it be joyful, and that is all’), a clear indication that the procedure existed at least as early as Shahrukh’s time.
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Other Timurid examples are the earliest recorded Persian fālnāmāb. They include the one mentioned above dated aH 838 (AD 1435), a Qur’an with a full fālnāmāb in Persian prose,\(^5\) a Qur’an in the Shrine Library in Mashhad attributed to the 9th century aH (15th century AD),\(^6\) and a Qur’an dated aH 860 (AD 1455–6) in the Gulistan Palace Library with a versified Persian fālnāmāb in nasta’liq.\(^7\) Thus the attribution of the introduction of the versified version to the reign of Shahrukh may not be far from the truth, particularly since the pre-Shahrukh versions are all in prose.\(^8\)

The most detailed fālnāmāb in the Collection is in a Qur’an most probably copied in Shiraz and dated aH 939 (AD 1532), which, it has been plausibly suggested, belonged to Shah Tahmasp (illustrated above).\(^9\) The fālnāmāb occupies four pages, and is headed سلاح فی این کلهم انت شک档次ا. The opening instructions are identical in content to the fālnāmāb bearing the name of Shahrukh,\(^10\) but a prose section follows the verses and prescribes a triple tasā’il followed by the surahs al-Fātīhah (1) and al-Ikhlās (cxI), three times each, succeeded by the prayer tas’alat . . . . This is followed by instructions in verse form, the seventh letter of the seventh line (of the ‘b’ folio) giving the fāl. The
Divination

letters of the alphabet and their significations are given in Persian couplets, one couplet per letter, followed by a detailed gloss in prose and a quotation from the Qur'an. Like other instructions for divination, this one has a finely illuminated head-piece, but the complexity of the text precludes its arrangement in tabular form. Another Qur'an in the Khalili Collection signed by Husayn Fakhkhkar al-Shirazi dated AH 972 (AD 1564-5) contains similar instructions to the versified part of the falâmâb in Shah Tahmasp's copy, and the fâl is in the seventh letter of the seventh line. The explanation of the letters is similar to that in the Qur'an copied by Ruzbihan in AH 972 (AD 1565-6). Other 16th-century Qur'âns with versified falâmâbs include two copied by 'Alâ al-Dîn Tabrizi in AH 978 (AD 1570-71) and AH 988 (AD 1572-73), at least five by 'Abd al-Qadir Husaynî, and one by Shams al-Dîn 'Abdallah in AH 989 (AD 1581-2), among others. Persian falâmâbs are also recorded in Qur'ans of the 11th century AH (17th century AD).

The occurrence of the Persian versified falâmâb in Qur'âns copied by three known Shirazi scribes, known respectively as Ruzbihan Shirazi, 'Abd al-Qadir Shirazi and Husayn Fakhkhkar al-Shirazi, as well as in earlier ones attributed to Shiraz, indicates its popularity in that city. Another Shirazi Qur'an in the Collection (cat. 38) originally had an appendix at the end which was detached from it at some point, on instructions for reading the Qur'an, talismanic charts and prayers, and advice on ways of using the Qur'an for istîkhrâj and the appropriate times for it. These are most instructive, and show the methods known in the 16th century, including three of Ibn Tawus's. As with all methods, various verses from the Qur'an and prayers are recommended to be recited before opening the Qur'an. The procedures and the arrangement of the text for one of the methods which is in prose are similar to the versified falâmâb of Safavid Qur'âns, particularly that of the Shah Tahmasp copy, but the interpretation of the letters differs and none of the Qur'ânic quotations is the same. This may well be a remnant of the pre-Timurid prose version which had survived in Shiraz.

In another method in the same manuscript, after having quoted one described by Ibn Tawus, the text continues in Persian with additions: 'if the word Allah appears ten times, the tenth line will give your answer, but if the verse ends on that line, the petitioner should go to the following line. If missing parts are added in the margins, those should be included in the calculation on the bases of two lines of marginal addition to one line of the text. If there are no occurrences of the word Allah on a particular page, the process should be repeated, as many times as are necessary to achieve a result.' One method is attributed to Mirza Muhammad Hasan Hujjar al-Islâm (d. AH 1322/AD 1839), but it is in fact one of the methods given by Ibn Tawus.

The different methods described in this appendix show that the 12th-century methods, in which a Qur'ânic verse gave the answer, as well as a version of the 15th- and 16th-century method, in which the initial letter of the first line with its interpretation gave the answer, were still recommended. This system almost inevitably leads to contradictions with the content of certain verses, but the problem is not discussed. Despite the inclusion of the system, there is no example of interpretation by initial letters in Qur'âns of the post-Fath'âli Shah period.

Yet another method for divination by the Qur'an is given by H. Lisan, reported from the Yawaquz. The procedure is based on the seven folios and the seven lines, but it ends with 'if you come across the bañâlalâb there is no doubt that it is a fortunate fâl.' The latest copies of the Qur'an in the Collection with versified falâmâbs are cat. 13 (dated AH 1228/AD 1813-14) and a restored Safavid Qur'an. The falâmâb at the beginning of the latter, which is dated AH 1539 (AD 1629-30) but was re-margined in AH 1224 (AD 1809-10), is written in Persian verse in a casual shikastâh hand. It is in the Timurid/Safavid tradition, except that instead of one couplet, a quatrain is allocated to each letter: the first couplet is similar to the versified couplets in the Shah Tahmasp Qur'an and the second is the verse rendering of the prose parts of the same Qur'an; and the falâmâb ends with a couplet requesting the reader's prayers for the scribe. At the time of the Qur'an's restoration a new method of divination was also added, marked by letters: bad for bad...
(bad), kha for good (khub), mim for medium (mijanan), mim-kha for medium good (mijanan khab) and mim-ba for medium bad (mijanan bad). The inclusion of a new method must indicate a change in the use of the Qur'an for divination. With the Timurid method, a letter determined the interpretation, while in the new system it is the line and its context that gives the answer. Unsurprisingly, the two methods often give contradictory results. For instance, the letter waw in the Persian versified salmanab is considered to be good, while in the new system the verse starting with the same letter is variously marked as bad (folios 89b and 72b), medium good (folio 39b), medium bad (folio 46b), medium (folio 33b) and good (folio 32b). Kaf in the first systems is bad, but in the abbreviated form it is medium (folio 29b) or medium good (folio 30b).
The earliest Qur’an with this new system using the Qur’an for istikbārat rather than fa‘l is dated AH 1244 (AD 1829).26 The main text is followed by the same prayer used for the versified form, but it is headed du‘ā‘-yi istikbārāb, (‘prayer for istikbārat’) followed by key words and their explanation (for example, kh for khāb, ‘good’), followed by the colophon.

The only Qur’an in the Collection to contain full instructions mentioning its authorized source as Ibn Tawus is cat.13, dated AH 1255 (AD 1837–8),27 which was commissioned by someone, most probably a cleric, in the service of the Imam Jum‘ah of Tehran for the use in the Shah Mosque in Tehran. According to this version the enquirer should take a Qur’an, recite the Ayat al-Kurîh, followed by parts of verse 59 of the surah al-A‘râf (v.i) and the taqīyāb ten times, meditate on his wish, and follow this by the prayer tafa‘alun . . . Then he should open the Qur’an, count the number of times the word Allah appears on the right-hand page (the ‘b’ folio), count this number of folios, then the same number of lines from the top of the left-hand page (the ‘a’ folio); the final line then gives the answer.

Folio 2a of cat.25, dated AH 1280 (AD 1865–6), includes the istikbārat method recorded by Ibn Tawus from the mubādhdhīb al-Shaykh al-Khānīb al-Mustaghfīrī (Illustrated on p.92), but here it is attributed to Imam Ja‘far al-Sadāq; the recommended Qur’anic verses and prayers having been recited, the Qur’an should be opened; the first line of the ‘b’ folio will give the answer.28 As in cat.13, this would mean that the verse had to be interpreted according to the wish of the enquirer so a knowledge of Arabic on the petitioner’s part was required. However, each ‘b’ folio of cat.25 is marked with a definite answer. Since both indications appear to be contemporary, the line must already have been interpreted and the results then written in full form, which in this manuscript is placed top centre instead of the more common top right-hand corner.

A Safavid Qur’an in the Khalili Collection, copied by Ibrahim Muzzahib, and re-margin in AH 1473 (AD 1856), contains the abbreviated letter forms in red on the ‘b’ folio, and a note on the opening page explaining that they are signs for istikbārat (illustrated above). It then gives the terms in full, as well as their abbreviated forms.29

There are no instructions in cat.70, dated AH 1316 (AD 1898–9), other than the prayer to be recited, but there are full indications, in gold illuminated devices, at the centre of the upper margin of each ‘b’ folio. The omission seems to indicate that by the end of the 19th century the procedure was sufficiently well known to users to make full instructions redundant. The change in method must reflect a change in Iranian attitudes towards the use of the Qur’an for divination during the reign of Fath‘alī Shah, when the term istikbārat replaces fa‘l in Qur’ans, and many copies of the Qur’an have ready-marked indications.
Many Qur'ans copied or restored in the second half of the 19th century contain the ready-marked istikhrāb key letters in the upper right-hand corner or occasionally at the centre of the upper margin of the 'b' folios (cat. 25 and 70). These indications are always in Persian, written either without any decoration, or in illuminated cartouches (cat. 27, 26, 30, 31, 66, 67, 69), or in a corner-piece illuminated with foliage inside the inner ruling (cat. 27). The full set of possible indicants numbers seven, and the minimum three, either in full (cat. 10) or in abbreviated form (cat. 67), the latter with both full and abbreviated forms. The full terms used are: bad (bad), khāb (good), miyānah or wasat (medium), wasat/miyānah khāb (medium good), wasat/miyānah bad (medium bad), biyār khāb (very good) and biyār bad (very bad). The abbreviated forms vary slightly: the letters dāl or bā for bad (bad), bā for khāb (good), mīm or tā for miyānah and wasat (medium), mīm-khā or tā-khā for miyānah khāb or wasa: khāb (medium good), mīm-bā or tā-dāl for miyānah bad and wasat bad (medium bad), bā-khā for biyār khāb (very good) and bā-dāl for biyār bad (very bad).

Cat. 7, dated A.H. 1245 (AD 1829–30), is the only Qur'an in the Collection where, in addition to the indications at the top right-hand corner (the 'b' folio), the Qur'anic verse indicating the answer to an istikhrāb also appears, marked in minute letters in blue, placed at the beginning of the verse, which often fall on the previous page (i.e. the 'a' folio). Occasionally, for lack of space, these letters are placed at the end of the previous verse, or under or above the verse marker.

Cat. 8 is unique in that the letters in blue are placed at the end of practically every verse up to folio 286a, from which point they cease. The indications in the illuminated corner-pieces of the outer ruling relate only to the verse that is carried over from the previous page, as they would in other Qajar Qur'ans with istikhrāb indications. The marking of each verse is an indication that it could be used both for the first line to give the answer or for other series of steps resulting in any verse whatsoever, not just the first, seventh or eleventh line. This would include the method in which the number of occurrences of the word Al-lāh on a page also indicates the line to be consulted.

The change in methods of divination by use of the Qur'an may be related to the growing power of the 'ulama'. The process used in Timurid and Safavid Qur'ans does not require knowledge either of the whole Qur'an or of Arabic. Once the short Qur'anic quotations and the prayer have been recited, the fahāmanab instructions are always given in Persian, the language of the people. Interestingly, Majlis, who lived during the Safavid period, ignored this method, which suggests either that he disapproved of it (though if so it is surprising that he does not say so), or, more likely, that the Persian verse form was the popular version not known to him. The later methods prescribed for istikhābāb involved knowledge of Arabic to obtain a result. This explains the glosses to the Qur'anic verses on the page, which must be the work of a cleric.

The variation in Qur'anic istikhābāb under the Qajars seems to indicate the absence of a single established system. This may reflect the development of the usūlī school of fiqh, in which a mujtahid could voice his own opinion. Whether the power of the usūlī doctrines extended as far as such minor matters as istikhābāb is, however, not clear.

Instructions are also given on good and evil hours of the days of the week, and the most auspicious times for istikhābāb. For example, Majlis, quoting Jāfar al-Qumī, states that istikhābāb should be practised immediately after prayer, since Satan is furthest from the enquirer at this time. In the appendix to cat. 28, the best times are: Saturdays, between the true dawn and sunrise, and from noon until the afternoon prayer; Sundays, from the true dawn to noon, and from the afternoon prayer until sunset; Mondays, from the true dawn to sunrise, and from breakfast to noon; Tuesdays, from breakfast until noon, and from the afternoon prayer to bedtime; Wednesdays, from the true dawn until noon, when the sun begins to go down, and from the afternoon prayer until bedtime; Thursdays, from the true dawn to sunrise, and from breakfast to the afternoon prayer, and (again) from sunset until bedtime; and Fridays, from the true dawn to sunrise, and from breakfast until the afternoon prayer, and (again) from sunset until bedtime. Qur'ī's auspicious times for istikhābāb are slightly different: Saturdays, until breakfast, then from noon until the afternoon prayer; Sundays, until noon, then from the afternoon prayer until sunset.
Mondays, until sunrise, then after breakfast until noon, and (again) from the afternoon prayer until nightfall; Tuesdays, from breakfast until noon, and then from the afternoon prayer until nightfall; Wednesdays, until noon, and then from the afternoon prayer until nightfall; Thursdays, until sunrise, and from noon until nightfall; Fridays until sunrise, and then from noon until the afternoon.88

Despite all these leading Shi' sources, none of the instructions resemble either those for ḥalafa' al-fāl or those for iṣṭikhābah which are found in studied Qur'an's other than cat.15, which was copied for the use in the Shah Mosque. In this case one may be dealing with what seem to be the official systems prescribed by theologians on the one hand rather that the popular methods on the other.

3. Afshar includes books written specifically for divination, such as illustrated Fāṭimah-the Fāṭimah-ye Dānīy, the Damīr-i bhavani and the Fāṭimah- attributed to Imam Jafar Sadiq. Afsar 1999, pp. 172–74.
5. The ma'āreditāz, the last two stanzas of the Qur'an.
6. Ibn Fudayq, ed. Bahmahay, p. 175. The procedures to be followed are not given.
13. Iskander Bayq 1350, p. 599.
22. Arshin 1352, 11, pp. 244.
27. Other verses are: 'Say: The (Qur'an) was sent down by Him Who knows the Mystery (that is) in
the heavens and the earth' (surah al-Fajr, 89, verse 6) and 'Verily God knows (all) the hidden things of the heavens and the earth: Verily He has full knowledge of all that is in (men's) hearts' (surah al-Fātir, 31, verse 38).
30. Dehkhoda 1341, 11, pp. 72–73.
32. He also quotes references to divination by iṣṭikhābah in Persian texts, including Kallâh wa Dimmah, Bayhaqi's Ta'ī al-maṣādīr and Ta'rīmūr-ye Yamsut. Dehkhoda 1350. 19. I am extremely grateful to Dr. Milani for his discussion of divination by the Qur'an, and for his references to the Bihār al-ansāb, the Wasl al-āl-āb and al-ṣīrūf. There is also a footnote referring to these in the Tarīkh-i Qum (Nasir al-Shirzi) 1355, pp. 226–27.
35. Al-Zāki 1981, p. 44.
44. Christie's, London, 14 October 1997, lot 16.
47. James 1993, no. 41.
49. James 1994, no. 43 and 45.
50. Nasir al-Din al-Jazairi, 1929, no. 41.
51. James 1993, no. 39. Another Qur'an by the same scribe, dated 1445/14 (42), with the Fāṭimah in nasus Zaf, is in the Islamic Museum (ex-Iran Bastak) in Tehran (Bayani & Bayani 1328, no. 79, pp. 15–19).
52. Guhlisit 1347, no. 83; Forstl et al. 1993, pp. 175–77. Another is in the al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait, 1377–78. For more on the scribe, see Bayani, CONTINUUM & Stanley 1999, no. 64, p. 201–2. Also James 1993, no. 47.
53. Guhlisit 1347, no. 83–91. The text is not published.
55. Guhlisit 1347, no. 60. 56. See note 46 above.
57. Guhlisit 1347, no. 60.
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59. Atchley 1337, no. 126.
60. In a Qur'an dated 1376/7
60.1364 sold at Sotheby's, London,
5 October 2003, lot 4.
61. Geneva 1915, no. 66; James 1993b,
no. 43, p. 172.
62. See note 56 above.
63. James 1992b, no. 184, no. 41.
64. James 1993b, no. 39.
65. Gulchin 1347, no. 93; Bahrami &
Bayani 1328, no. 107.
66. Gulchin 1347, no. 88–91; and one in the al-Salah Collection
in Kuwait, see note 54 above.
67. Bahrami & Bayani 1328, no. 91.
68. Gulchin 1347, no. 120, 121;
Bahrami & Bayani 1328, nos 98, 99
and 101; Ashraf 1962, nos 30 and 38.
69. Bahrami & Bayani 1328, no. 102,

70. The same instructions are given
by Ibn Tawus, but he attributes
them to al-Mustaghfriri; Ibn Tawus,
ed. al-Khalif, p. 156.
71. See also Bayani, Comadini &
Stanley 1999, no. 10.
72. See also Bayani, Comadini &
Stanley 1999, no. 94.
73. See note 79.
74. See note 82.
75. See also Bayani, Comadini &
Stanley 1999, no. 48.
76. See note 79.
77. See note 82.
78. See also Bayani, Comadini &
Stanley 1999, no. 42.
79. See also Bayani, Comadini &
Stanley 1999, no. 82.
Single-volume Qur'an
Iran, first half of the 19th century

372 folios, 14.7 x 13.3 cm, with 11 lines to the page
Material: A very crisp, cream/grey paper, furnished and glossy, laid, with approximately 11 laid lines to the centimetre and no apparent rib shadows or chain lines
Text area: 8 x 6.5 cm
Script: Main text in naqshī, with reading marks in red; the index, prayer, surah titles, text divisions and sawtah in riqa’; marginal texts in naqshī and shikastaš
Illumination: Extensive decoration on folios 1-23, 368b-370b; each line of text separated from the next by a band of gold illumination, framed with black and gold rules; text frame of a narrow gold band, blue and black rules and a narrow blue band with white crosses; outer frame of black and gold rules; verses marked by gold rossettes outlined in black with red and dots in red and blue on folios 32-75, 368b-369a, and plain gold discs; surah headings, marginal text divisions and sawtah
Documentation: Traces of a later attribution note, and a seal impression (whether significant)
Binding: Late 19th-century lacquer
Accession no.: Q1766
Published: Khalili, Robinson & Stanley, 1996-7, part two, no. 418

This undocumented and unfinished Qur'an exhibits features not found in other copies of the Qur'an of this period. These include interlinear gold illumination, which replaces the characteristic Qajar interlinear Persian translation, and the peculiar decoration of the sawtah.

The manuscript opens with a ruled page, which is blank, followed by a double-page spread of illumination on folios 1b-2a, containing the index to the Qur'an, written in white or cherry-red riqa’ on alternating gold and silver squares. The marginal decoration of gold leaves and flowers outlined in black on an uncoloured ground with touches of colour was added later in the 19th century. The central panels of the following spread (folios 2b-3a) contain lobed vertical cartouches, which include the prayer to be recited on commencing the Qur'an, written in gold riqa’ on a blue ground decorated with gold arabesque scrolls. Four smaller red cartouches decorated with gold arabesque scrolls are placed in the field surrounding the main cartouches and are of the same date as the text. Like the margins, the field is decorated with fine gold leaves and flowers, outlined in black on an uncoloured ground with unfinished lotus blossoms. This decoration recurs in the margins of folios 4b-5a.

The main text of the Qur'an starts on a double-page spread of rich illumination, mainly in gold, blue, cherry-red and white. The text of this and the following spread (folios 3b-4a and 4b-5a) is written in clouds reserved against gold. The remainder of the Qur'anic text is written in black and gold ruled panels, with the interlinear narrow bands usually intended for the Persian translation filled with scrolling gold leaves. The text frame consists of a narrow gold band, a blue band decorated with white crosses, and blue and black rules. The treatment of the blue band is similar to the borders of the surah headings of cat.1. Catchwords are written in a casual nasta’lqīh band. Text divisions are in illuminated devices in gold riqa’ on a red or a blue ground decorated with gold scrolls, bordered with red or blue bands decorated with small flowers and finished with gold flame-like motifs, with additional gold leaves, and blossoms as finials. Surah titles are in gold riqa’ in blue or occasionally turquoise (folio 366b) cartouches decorated with gold arabesque scrolls, set in illuminated polychrome panels. The title of the surah is written in red riqa’ at the top left-hand corner of the ‘a’ folios. Surah al-A’imām (viii) (folios 79a, 80a, 85b, 85b, 86a and 86b) is the only one with marginal texts, giving instructions in Persian shikastaš, nasta’lqīh or naqshī on various points or when particular prayers should be read in connection with one’s desires. The text of the prayers is given only in naqshī. The final two chapters (folios 368b-369a) are written on a double-page illuminated spread of inferior quality, belonging to the late Qajar period. The last two pages of illumination (folios 369b-370a) are similar to folios 2b-3a, except that the ext is the prayer to be recited on concluding the Qur'an, and that the margins are left undecorated.

There is an impression of a seal with a sunburst motif on folio 370b. A note of attribution on an added folio 371b has been washed out. The main fields of the lacquer outer covers have a crackleform device at their centre, which is surrounded by bands of fine illumination on black and gold grounds. The composition is enclosed by a four-fold border of various types of scrollwork on black and crimson grounds. The doublures are black, with a flowering plant in gold.
The Nasir al-Din Shah period

In other copies, which replaces marginal decoration with a double-page spread, written in flowing spread and so to be recited surahs, outlined in gold scrolls are dated as the text.

In illumination, surah titles are in gold scrolls, of the surah is written (v(i)) (folios 79a, instructions in the 15th century prayer to be celebrated.

Note of attribution of fine illumination border of various black, with a
The Nasir al-Din Shah period
Single-volume Qur'an
Iran, probably Shiraz, first half of the 19th century

This lavishly illuminated Qur'an is the work of the great-great-grandson of the celebrated calligrapher Ahmad Nayarizi. Every juz' is fitted on to two folios, and each page is divided into three sections, separated by gold and coloured rulings. The main text is written in the central panel in small naskh in clouds, reserved against gold. This is bordered on three sides with Persian commentaries in black with the Qur'anic quotations in red and dicta on the virtues of reciting each surah, according to various Shi'i Imams, in red nasta'liq in clouds reserved against gold. From surah al-Nâzi'at (1,331x) on folio 61b to the end, the virtues are given alternately in red and black. The outer border of each page is illuminated with combinations of gold flowers and leaves with occasional touches of lapis-blue or of red on an uncoloured ground. The outer borders are also edged with blue tassel-like motifs.

This Qur'an has various peculiar features. Two types of verse marker are used. The first is a gold disc outlined in black with radii and dots, which in places is transformed into stylized butab patterns. The same type is used as verse markers in cat. 14, which is dated AH 1215 (AD 1837–8), copied by 'Ali 'Askar Arsanjani. Surah titles are written in white riqa' outlined in black on a plain gold ground, or gold riqa' on lapis-blue, and occasionally in gold on a red ground (folios 30a, 51b, 63a), set in panels illuminated in gold and polychrome, often broken up into two sections with the basmalab between. For lack of space, in some places only the title of the surah is given, without the place of its revelation or the number of verses. Text divisions and sajadah are indicated in the margins by illuminated pear-shaped or almond-shaped devices. Catchwords are in naskh.

The manuscript opens with three double-page illuminated spreads. The first (folios 18–22) bears the index to the Qur'an, written in gold riqa' in lapis-blue octagons, with cross-shaped panels between and a red cartouche at the centre. The outer borders are decorated with gold flowers and leaves outlined in black, the centres of the flower-heads filled with light blue or pink on an uncoloured ground. The second double-page spread (folios 28–32) is divided into sections like the previous pages, except that the central panels bear the prayer to be read on commencing the Qur'an in gold riqa' in a lobed lapis-blue medallion decorated with gold scrolls. Variously shaped illuminated palmettes are arranged around the central medallion on a gold ground filled with flower-heads and scrolls. The corner-pieces are also divided into two, part being decorated with arabesques and flowers on a lapis-blue ground, and part with gold arabesques outlined in black on a gold ground. The illumination of these pages is also reflected in the decoration of the covers.

The surah al-Fâtihah (1) and the beginning of surah al-Baqara (2) are written on the following double-page illuminated spread (folios 3b–4a). The arrangement of these pages differs markedly from the corresponding spread in other copies of the Qur'an. The main text, as usual, is written in clouds, reserved against gold, bordered first with a band of gold strapwork, and secondly with flowers and scrolls in gold and polychrome on a lapis-blue ground. The two panels above and below contain the surah titles in gold riqa' in a lapis-blue cartouche decorated with gold scrolls, and set in illuminated panels in gold and polychrome. The head-pieces are exquisitely illuminated in gold and colours with various floral and scroll patterns. These sections are bordered on three sides with an illuminated gold band decorated with scrolling flowers and lapis-blue cartouches. The cartouches, which are identical on each page, contain an invocation to God and The Fourteen Immaculates. They are bordered with two other bands. The first band includes commentaries on the surahs, and the second is decorated with gold flowers and leaves all outlined in black on an uncoloured ground. The centres of the blossoms are painted in blue. The outer borders of these pages are decorated with alternate gold and blue tassel-like...
The Nastir al-Din Shah period

motifs. The margins of the rest of the manuscript are illuminated in the same style, except that the designs employed vary and occasionally the colour red is used for the centres of blossoms (as on folio 32a), and tassels are in blue only.

The colophon (folio 63a) records that the scribe, Muhammad Qasim, is the great-great-grandson of the celebrated calligrapher Ahmad Niyazi.1 This would date the Qur'an roughly to the first half of the 19th century (compare with cat.14). Cat.18 contains one of the two known references to Ahmad Niyazi's otherwise unrecorded descendants. The other is a manuscript in the Majlis Library in Tehran,2 which was copied by Husayn ibn Muhammad Taqi ibn Muḥsin ibn al-Mahdi ibn al-Ḵaḍir ibn al-Aḥmad al-Niyazi and dated AH 1269 (AD 1852–3) recording its transfer to a certain Abdullah Munshi Mazandarani in Shiraz. Both scribes were descendants of Muhammad Baqir, son of Ahmad Niyazi. An owner's note on folio 1a has been washed off, with only a few words of transfer of manuscript from one owner to another and parts of a prayer decipherable and the impression of a small oval seal. Folio 63b is fully ruled, but left blank.

The fine lacquered covers are divided into sections, arranged around a cruciform device. The central panel contains lobed vertical cartouches within cartouches, each decorated with a different arrangement of scrolls, flowers and arabesques on variously coloured grounds, mainly in gold. Two similarly decorated arched bands end the top and bottom of this central panel. This section is bordered with a calligraphic band including surah al-Ḥāji (24:1), verse 35, on the front cover, and surah al-Baqara (2:38), verse 355, on the back cover. The use of different quotations from the Qur'an for the front and back covers is not a common practice. The outer border is gold illuminated with flowers and leaves on a black ground. These sections are all separated by gold ruled bands also with gold decoration. The covers of this Qur'an in some ways resemble the illuminations of folios 29b–32 and the covers of cat.17.

The front doublure is divided into two sections. The upper part includes a Persian text in nastābī written in gold- and black-ruled panels. The text is a citation from Imam Ḥasan ʿAlī reporting the Prophet's directions regarding the virtues and rewards of bearing his shamāyil (physical characteristics). The lower section lists the Prophet's shamsayl in ruled panels, written in Arabic ṣūqā' with interlinear Persian translations in shikastah. (At one point the scribe's Arabic failed him, as he filled the panel with a continuous foliate design.) The inscriptions in both Arabic and Persian are in yellow, and set in panels decorated with gold scrolls and leaves. The borders are decorated with a continuous leaf-and-scroll pattern. The back doublure is also divided into two sections. The upper part is divided into black- and gold-ruled panels, giving the names of the twelve months of the year on the right-hand panel. The other panels contain traditions attributed to each month according to various authorities, written alternately in yellow and in white ṣūqā' on a red ground decorated with scrolls and flowers. The lower part is divided into ruled panels, 15 across and 15 down, with every word in the surah al-Fāṭirah (1) written in white ṣūqā' in the panel in such a way that the full chapter can be read vertically, horizontally and diagonally. The initial and the final word of the chapter are written only once and the middle word 15 times. The borders are decorated in the same manner as the front doublures.
The Nasir al-Din Shah period
The Nasir al-Din Shah period
19

Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, possibly Shiraz, AH 1264 (AD 1847–8) and AH 1265 (AD 1848–9)

The manuscript starts with surah al-Fatihah (1) and the beginning of surah al-Baqarah (2) on a double-page spread of illumination (folios 1b–2a) predominantly in cherry-red, but in lapis-blue and gold too. Blue tassels edge the borders. Only on this spread is the text written in clouds reserved against plain gold. The outer ruling on folios 2b–3a bears an edging of similar tassels, but in gold and facing inwards. There are no reading marks. Catchwords are given in small nastaliq: Surah titles are in gold riqa' on lapis-blue cartouches decorated with gold scrolls, set in panels illuminated in polychrome and gold. Text divisions are similarly treated, except that they appear in various shapes—juz' in eight-pointed stars, half-juz' and sujadah in pear-shaped cartouches, and bida in lozenge-shaped devices, all richly illuminated and with similarly treated finials.

The colophon (folio 169b) in riqa' records that the Qur'an manuscript was completed at the request of Yahya Khan and given the name of the scribe, 'Abd al-Ghafur ibn Habibullah al-Husayni. The colophon for the Persian translation on the same folio is in red nastaliq (below the main colophon) and bears the name of the scribe responsible, Muhammad Hasan, with the date, AH 1265 (AD 1848–9).

Yahya Khan (AH 1247–1309/AD 1831–91), who later bore the titles Mu'tamid al-Mulk and Mushir al-Dawlah, was the fourth husband of 'Izz al-Dawlah, a sister of Nasir al-Din Shah, and the brother of Mirza Husayn Khan, Nasir al-Din Shah's Commander-in-Chief. He studied in Paris and, on his return, was appointed interpreter at the Foreign Office, in AH 1272 (AD 1855–6), then was sent to St Petersburg as deputy to the ambassador. When he returned, in AH 1273 (AD 1856–7), he was made aide-de-camp to Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri. After the dismissal of Aqa Khan Nuri in AH 1275 (AD 1858–9), Nasir al-Din Shah made Yahya Khan his personal aide-de-camp and interpreter. Yahya Khan was sent to the Ottoman court in AH 1276 (AD 1859–60) for some particular reason (it is not stated what), bearing nişābat (orders). He returned a year later with nişābat for the Iranian nobles. He was given the title Mu'tamid al-Mulk in late AH 1284 (AD 1868), and married Nasir al-Din Shah's sister in AH 1285 (AD 1869–70). Among his later posts were the governorships of Arax, Luristan, Khuzistan, Gilân, Fars and Mazendaran. He was given the title Mushir al-Dawlah in AH 1299 (AD 1882–3), and was appointed Foreign Minister in AH 1309 (AD 1892–3) and Minister of Justice and Trade in AH 1316 (AD 1899–1900). He is said to have been clever, intelligent, courageous, generous and pro-Russian.

There is no mention of Yahya Khan's whereabouts at the time he commissioned this Qur'an. His name is included in a list of the deputees of Fars, without giving their dates, but he was not appointed governor of Fars until AH 1302 (AD 1885–6), long after this manuscript was commissioned. His father, Mirza Nabi Khan (a son-in-law of Fath'ali Shah, and the Chief Magistrate), however, was put in charge of affairs in Shiraz on two occasions, in AH 1256 (AD 1839–40) and AH 1259 (AD 1842–3). The fact that this Qur'an shows stylistic features of Qur'ans copied in Shiraz may indicate that it was commissioned through Yahya Khan's father there.

An undated treatise on the Prophet and the Imams in the Gulistan Palace Library was commissioned by the same patron, 'Yahya Khan Ijkhami'. His seal, which reads 'Through the benevolence of Muhammad Shah, Yahya became Ijkhami', appears at the end of this manuscript to the reign of Muhammad Shah, when Yahya Khan held the title Ijkhami ('chief tain of the [Qur'ān] tribe'), the only title he held at the time that cat.19 was commissioned. The phrase umdāt al-khawasīn al-lūzām ('the support of the great Khans') mentioned in the colophon is probably a reference to his position as 'the Khan of the tribe'.

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The Nasir al-Din Shah period

The bold naskh of the otherwise unrecorded scribe of the main text, 'Abd al-Ghafur, is of especially fine quality. 'Abd al-Ghafur should not to be confused with the Afghan scribe of cat. 4, a Qur'an copied in AH 1229 (AD 1813–14). The identity of the nasta’liq scribe is also unclear. A copy of Nasihat al-muluk, a book of counsel for kings, dated AH 1295 (AD 1878) in Istanbul University Library was copied for the Ottoman sultan Abdülhamid II. The scribe signs himself once as ‘Muhammad Hasan the secretary and the interpreter of the Persian Embassy in Istanbul’, and once as ‘Muhammad Hasan Munshi al-Farsi’. Considering the fact that Yahya Khan was sent to the Ottoman court in AH 1276 (AD 1859–60), and that he most probably needed an interpreter and a secretary, he may well have taken Muhammad Hasan with him, who may then have stayed on in Istanbul.

The outer covers are decorated with a bold flower-and-bird composition on a gold ground, one of the largest known single compositions of this type on a lacquer binding, with a narrow edging of a repeating diaper design in gold on red. The doubles are dark red, each being painted in gold with an iris plant.

Jak and Jao manuscripts
left 19 folios 252v (detail)
right 19 folios 340v (detail)
The Nasir al-Din Shah period
Single-volume Qur’an

Iran, Varzanah, near Isfahan, 30 Ramadan 1265 (12 June 1849)

The text is written in clouds reserved against modestly applied gold throughout. No reading instructions are given. Unusually, the Persian interlinear translation is written in small red naskh on an uncoloured ground, except on folios 1b–2a, where it is on a plain gold ground. Catchwords are given in small riqa’, written more towards the centre than, as usual, close to the spine. Finely illuminated devices mark the marginal text divisions and the sajdah, which are written in gold riqa’ and are similar to those found in cat.30. Those marking the juz’ are in the form of a shamsa, while half juz’, bīzih and sajdah are lozenge-shaped, all with finials in polychrome and gold. Surah titles are written in gold riqa’ outlined in black within blue or red cartouches decorated with scrollwork in gold on illuminated panels in gold and colour.

The manuscript starts with the main text, written on a double-page spread (folios 1b–2a) of polychrome illumination predominantly in gold and lapis-blue, somewhat reminiscent of the spectrum of Safavid illumination. The border is of broken zigzags in blue, densely filled with florets and half-palmette scrolls. The manuscript has suffered damage, and has been repaired in places, some parts being rewritten. A marginal note in pencil on folio 324b indicates that some sections of the text had been erased and rewritten.

It is interesting to note that no patronymics are given for either the patron or the scribe in the colophon, which is written in riqa’ (folio 318b). Neither the patron nor the scribe of this Qur’an has been identified, but the records of births and deaths on folios 1a and 318b provide us with some information.

Varzanah, where this manuscript was commissioned and copied, is a village east of Isfahan. The Qur’an was still in the family’s hands in 1924. The patron died in AH 1266 (AD 1850), a year after the Qur’an was completed. Judging by the names given in the notes on folios 1a and 318b (see p. 284), the Qur’an was handed down from Aqa Baba to ‘Abd al-Ghafrur (probably the son of Aqa Baba), then to his son Aqa Muhammad, then to his son Muhammad Jafar, and finally to ‘Abd al-Ghafrur’s (probably the son of Aqa Baba). As the family of the mother of Muhammad Jafar, had made the pilgrimage to Mecca. ‘Baba’ is a term often used for the eldest member of the family or an epithet for a Sufi shaykh, although the epithets preceding his name here are not those of a Sufi. He may have been a local worthy. Sayyid ‘Ali was probably the scribe of both the main text and the translation; this Qur’an is his only recorded work. There are, however, two copies of the Qur’an in the Gulistan Palace Library signed by a certain Sayyid ‘Ali, dated AH 1264 (AD 1847–8) and AH 1267 (AD 1850–51) respectively, both written in ghubrah, one with the entire Qur’an on two folios, and the other on two pages. The absence of the attribution ‘Varzanah’ in these copies makes it difficult to say whether they are by the scribe of cat.20.

The lacquer covers are decorated with flowers of all kinds in a central panel on a gold-sprinkled ground, and corner-pieces with flowers and leaves in gold. The borders bear cartouches with scrolling flowers and leaves, alternating with four-lobed cartouches containing a rosette. The bands separating the sections are filled with scrolling leaves in gold. The doublures are unusually decorated with tangent circles decorated with rosettes, and leaves all in gold on a red ground. The borders are decorated with a band of gold rosettes and leaves on red and a band of gold dots on black.
The Nasir al-Din Shah period

Throughout. No
lettering is written
here. Instead, the centre
is filled with a panel of
text, divided by vertical
lines that resemble
columns. The text is
written in gold
lettering on a blue
background.

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This Qur'an is written in small naskh in order to fit each juz' onto two pages (each half-juz' on one page). The text division markers for juz' and in the middle of the juz' are illuminated eight-pointed stars in the top right- or left- hand corners of the margins of each page with the text written in blue. Almond-shaped devices for kissah are placed halfway down the margins, and are written in red. Only one sasab is marked (folio 31a) and that is in the shape of a bustah. All illuminated devices have finials. Catchwords are in naskh. Surah titles are written alternately in lapis-blue and red riqa' on plain gold cartouches set in illuminated panels in gold and polychrome. Persian texts on the virtues of reciting each chapter, according to various Shi'i Imams as well as the Prophet, are written obliquely in nasta'liq in cloud forms reserved against plain gold, forming vertical or horizontal cartouches.

The manuscript opens with a double-page spread of illumination (folios 2b–2a) in various colours, but predominantly in lapis-blue, gold and red. These two pages are divided into panels and bands. The central panels contain surah al-Fatiha (1) and the beginning of surah al-Baqarah (2), each panel containing six lines of text only, with interlinear gold patches. These panels are framed in a band of blossoms and leaves in colours on a gold ground. The panels above and below contain the surah titles and surah al-Waqi'ah (lvii), verses 79–80, in gold riqa' on a red ground decorated with gold scrollwork. Above the surah headings are panels with almond-shaped medallions, at the centre of which is a cruciform motif, and alternate bands of blue and gold filled with small flowers. The panels above bear the prayer to be read on commencing the Qur'an, written in gold riqa' on lapis-blue cartouches, set in illuminated panels. Eight-pointed stars set in the bands give the index to the Qur'an in red riqa' on a plain gold ground. The margins of these pages are decorated with gold leaves and blossoms with touches of colour on an uncoloured ground, and are edged with tassel-like motifs in blue. The same marginal decoration and interlinear gold patches appear on the following pages (folios 2b–3a), but are absent from the rest of the manuscript.

The main text is followed by a prayer to be read on concluding the reading of the Qur'an. The heading for this section is like those for the surahs, except that the gold cartouche is set in a lapis-blue band decorated with gold flowers. Folio 31a is ruled but left blank, while a note on folio 31b in shikastah includes a tradition reported from al-Saddiq in the Kitab-‘i Tawarīkh-i akhba‘, traced through various authorities, including the Twelve Imams and the angels, Gabriel, Michael and Azrael, relating to an Arabic district that would cure any sick person who read it. Basing himself on this tradition, the scribe prays for health. This note is dated 'in the month of Dhul-Hijjah the year 1269' (September–October 1853).

The lacquered covers, though not of the same quality, resemble the covers of cat.18 in arrangement. The central lobed medallion depicts a bouquet of flowers on a black ground, set in another medallion decorated with scrolling flowers and leaves on a gold ground. A narrow band of similar decoration on a black ground separates these medallions from arched bands, which are likewise decorated. The marginal bands contain surah al-Baqarah (2), verse 251 and parts of verse 256, written in gold riqa' on a black ground. The doublures are decorated with a naskh in gold on a red ground, with gold-ruled borders.

The manuscript is in a red morocco case with blind-tooled corner pieces. The borders, sides and the flap are of plain green leather. The inside is lined with marbled paper. The case was for a copy of the Sabifah Sajjidiyyah, as indicated in ink on its upper surface.
The Nasir al-Din Shah period

gold cartouches on the upper edge of each page with the Qur'an, al-Kitab al-majeed, and that in the upper decorative borders. Surah titles and general notes are set in illuminated gold cartouches. The pages (each half-juz' or a'zah) are illuminated at the top and bottom of each page and contain surah titles and general notes. The borders are absent from the beginning of Surah al-Waqi'a (lvii), and above the middle of the page, the scribe wears a gold ring. The panels are divided into two columns and contain interlinear gold lines on a gold background. Above the page, the scribe wears a gold ring, and the scribe plays the Twelve-tone floral decoration and the Qur'an. The Qur'an is written in gold cartouches, with black ink and gold outline. The Qur'an is written in gold cartouches, with black ink and gold outline.

21 folio 2b
22

Single-volume Qur’an

Iran, Shiraz, main text circa AH 1260 (AD 1844–5) and Persian translation dated 25 Shaw’ban 1272 (2 May 1856)

The manuscript opens with a double-page illuminated spread (folios 2b–3a), bearing the index to the Qur’an, written in lapis-blue riq‘ah1 on plain gold roundels, set on a lapis-blue ground, decorated with linear foliate designs in white. The spaces between these are decorated with gold quatrefoils of florets and scrolls in polychrome. The margins are decorated with dark blue scrolls, reminiscent of the Safavid tradition exemplified in a Qur’an in the Khalili Collection, filled with small blossoms in gold and polychrome on a ground of gold flowers and leaves outlined in black with touches of polychrome on an uncoloured ground. The heading for this section is written in riq‘ah of an unusual bright green colour on a plain gold ground, set in a panel richly illuminated in polychrome and gold. The illuminations of these folios are almost identical to those of cat.28 (dated AH 1280/AD 1862), which was also copied in Shiraz.

The following double pages (folios 3b–4a) are fully illuminated, mainly in gold and lapis-blue. The central panels contain pricked gold cartouches and pendants in which the prayer to be recited on commencing the Qur’an is written in green outlined in black. Zigzag bands and cartouches decorated with flowers and leaves on variously coloured grounds decorate the sides, top and base of the central panels. The ground is densely filled with gold split-palmette scrolls decorated with linear floral patterns in black on a lapis-blue ground decorated with gold blossoms and leaves. The borders are identical to those of the preceding spread, except that the colour scheme is reversed, so that they are in gold on a lapis-blue ground.

The main text starts on the following double-page spread of illumination (folios 4b–5a). The head-pieces in many respects resemble those in the copy of the Zad al-ma‘ad in the Khalili Collection copied by Vaisal in AH 1314 (AD 1896–97).2 The text frame and the column borders, which are edged with tassel-like motifs in gold and red enhanced with blue, are also very similar. The ruling is also the same as in cat.28, and both copies of the Qur’an must therefore come from the same workshop.

The texts of surah al-Fātiha (1) and the beginning of surah al-Baqara (2) are written in ruled panels on clouds decorated with fine gold leaves and blue. The clouds on these and on the following pages are reserved against plain gold. The main text is written in fine, clear naskh resembling that of a Qur’an copied by Vaisal in AH 1260 (AD 1844–5).3 The interlinear Persian translation is written in red nasta‘liq. These narrow bands are also decorated with linear gold flowers and leaves on an uncoloured ground. The text areas of the following spread (folios 5b–6a) have similar illumination to that of the previous pages, but the margins are decorated with gold blossoms and feathery leaves outlined in black and with polychrome accents on an uncoloured ground, another example of the Safavid tradition seen in a Qur’an dated AH 1210 (AD 1699–90) in the Khalili Collection.4

The rest of the manuscript is written in black and gold ruled panels. Throughout, the basma‘al panels and the interlinear translation are decorated with continuous flower and leaf patterns in gold on an uncoloured ground. A narrow strip of a different paper is used for the gutter, as in cat.24, either because a stronger paper was needed for the binding or because the covers were too big and the manuscript needed to expand horizontally to fit them. A similar ruling to the basma‘al marks the joins.

Text divisions and sajadah indications are written in gold riq‘ah on a gold-illuminated ground of lapis-blue in devices illuminated in gold and polychrome with finials. The device used to mark each juz‘ is a roundel (sometimes pointed, as on folio 276a), for marking mid-juz‘ a half-roundel, and for hizb lozenge-shaped cartouches, all with finials. Surah titles are also written in gold riq‘ah on lapis-blue cartouches except for folios 281b–287b.
The Nasir al-Din Shah period

similar, there are sufficient differences in its method of production to assume a different mill of origin. 2. Bayani, Comadini & Stanley 1999, no. 27. 3. Verhoef 1997, no. 36. 4. Bayani 1319, no. 31. 5. Bayani, Comadini & Stanley 1999, no. 25.

For further details of Visal’s biography, see cat. 12.

7. Furraz al-Dawlah 1362, pp. 358–9; Bayani 1345-46, 111, pp. 689–93; Bayani 1329, nos 55 and 69, pp. 12–3 and 154–5; Bahrami & Bayani 1338, nos 104, 111; Hidayat 1295, pp. 102–1; including many of his poems; Atabey 1351, no. 11; Atabey 1355, no. 104; Badaam 1365, 71, pp. 347–8 with his portrait; Safwat 1396, p. 114, no. 144; Najib 1997, pi. 35–36.

8. Bayani 1329, pp. 12–3; Bahrami & Bayani 1338, nos 104, pp. 91–2; Atabey 1351, no. 12.

9. Atabey 1351, pp. 17–8. For Mirza Nazim Khan’s biography, see Badaam 1366, 211, pp. 148–9; Bahrami & Bayani 1338, pp. 89–9, no. 140.

11. For his biography, see Badaam 1366, 211, pp. 92–3.

where green and red cartouches are also included. They are decorated with gold scrollwork, set in illuminated panels of gold and polychrome. Catchwords are in naskh.

Shi’i traditions on the virtues of reading each surah are written in the margins in nasta’liq, in clouds reserved against gold, richly decorated with flowers in polychrome, within pointed vertical cartouches, framed above and below with bands of lapis-blue decorated with flowers in polychrome, and edged with flame-like patterns in gold highlighted in green and red. Towards the end of the manuscript, when more than one surah is written on a page, the spaces between these cartouches are decorated with gold leaves and flowers or occasionally outlined in black on an uncoloured ground (folios 286b–287b). The main text is followed by various prayers to be recited on concluding the Qur’an, each with indications in illuminated panels identical to the surah headings and with interlinear Persian translations similar to the rest of the manuscript. The translation of these prayers is not a common practice. The last page (folio 288b) was left unfinished, possibly due to the death of the scribe.

The colophon of the marginal texts, giving the name of the scribe, is on folio 25b and is dated 25 Shaban 1272 (2 May 1566). Mirza Mahmud (AH 1234–47/AD 1818–31), pen-named Hakim (the physician), was the second son of Mirza Kuchak Visal, the scribe of cat. 12. He was born in Shiraz and was educated in the humanities by his father. His pen-name was initially Tahb, but he changed it to Hakim after studying medicine. In AH 1266 (AD 1849–50), with his brother Ahmad Vaqar, Mahmud travelled to India at the invitation of Aqa Khan Mahallati, by request of the governor of the Deccan, Nizam al-Mulk. There he copied a Diwan of Hafiz and occasionally practised as a physician. Following the appointment of Prince Firuz, a son of Abbas Mirza, as governor of Shiraz (AH 1266–9/AD 1849–53), Mahmud and his brother were asked to return, which they duly did in AH 1268 (AD 1852). Mahmud became a disciple of the Sufi Rahman’Ali Shah, whose daughter he married. He died of cholera in Shiraz in AH 1274 (AD 1857–8) and was buried there. He was a nasta’liq scribe. His recorded works are dated between AH 1265 (AD 1845) and AH 1272 (AD 1856), which covers a very short period of his life. This may be due to the fact that he was a physician and travelled abroad, or that he copied long texts like the Rastakat as-ṣafī of Mir Khwand, and the Mantokhabah (abridgement) of the Shāhnāma. The Khāliqi Qur’an is so far his latest recorded work, and the third related to the Holy Book. His other works are mainly complete Persian texts, mostly commissioned.

A note on the flyleaf of a copy of the Qanunat of al-Firuzabadi in the Khaliqi Collection (155256) written by Farhad Mirza states that the deceased Mirza Mahmud Tabib (the physician) had failed to acquire this manuscript for him in AH 1261/AD 1845 when he was on pilgrimage to the shrine of the eightih Imam in Mashhad. The Mirza Mahmud in question is probably Mahmud ibn Visal, before he took his pen-name; if so, we may assume that Mahmud had been in Mashhad that year.

A Qur’an in the Gulistan Palace Library, with the same number of lines and similar dimensions to cat. 22, was copied by Visal in AH 1260 (AD 1844–5). This was his 68th Qur’an, according to the colophon, and each of his sons contributed to its finishing, with interlinear Persian translations by Mahmud (AH 1262/AD 1845–6); the properties associated with reciting each chapter by Aby’l-Qasim Farhang (AH 1272/AD 1855–6); the last two pages (epilogue) by Ahmad Vaqar (AH 1274/AD 1857–8); and lacquered covers by Lutf’ulli Shiraiz (AH 1274/AD 1857–8). In the epilogue, Ahmad Vaqar, who was Visal’s eldest, writes that this precious Qur’an is a valuable treasure chest of the arts and the book, and that all the great bibliophiles had sought to acquire it, and the best and last writing of his father, who had embellished it with the Seven Styles and left it to his children.
When the illumination, proof-reading and correction were finished, and the reading marks had been added, Vaqr took it to Tehran and presented it to Nizam al-Mulk Mirza Kazim Khan in AH 1274 (AD 1857–8). Ahmad Vaqr also completed a Qur'an in the National Library in Tehran, which Visal had begun in AH 1259 (AD 1843–4), He dedicated it to Bahram Mirza Qajar in AH 1265 (AD 1848–9). The existence of these two unfinished Qur'ans by Visal, and their completion by his sons, as well as the similarities between the Khalili Qur'an and other published works by Visal, may suggest that cat.22 was also copied by him, although he went blind just over a year before his death. The failure to cite the scribe of the main text may be because Ahmad Vaqr had not found any dedicatee for it. It is likely, therefore, that cat.22 was Visal's last, unfinished, work, and that the Gulistan Palace Library Qur'an was his final complete signed text.

The script of this Qur'an has certain features in common with that in the copy of the Zad al-ma'ad in the Khalili Collection, which was copied by Visal in AH 1254 (AD 1838–9). This may be an additional reason for attributing cat.22 to Visal, although some of these characteristics were probably common to many scribes: the curved alif following fath or qaf, the small sign over kaf, the sharp serif to the left or right of some upright letters, the hanging tā marbūta, the naddāb sign, and the use of riqā' forms at the end of a line, where the available space is insufficient. The hand of cat.22 is superior to MSS164, however, which is what one would expect for a Qur'an. It is written in a larger format, and, like cat.28, was probably intended for someone of note. It also has identical jadisīh and kamandīs, and a similar head-piece, which would have been the work of an illuminator who, like the lacquer painter Lutf'ali, had a close working relationship with the Visal family and would take on the illumination of manuscripts copied by them. Lutf'ali also made covers for two other manuscripts copied by them. The final folio (folio 189a) is fully ruled but left blank and the allocation of a cartouche for a heading on folio 281b may be an indication that it was meant for more prayers.

The outer covers of cat.22 have non-identical central panels, each with a flower-and-bird composition on a manānip ground. They are signed by Lutf'ali and is dated AH 1269 (AD 1852–3), three years before the completion of the marginal commentaries by Mahmud. The borders are decorated with elongated cartouches of roses on a gold ground alternating with lozenge-shaped medallions with a flower on a green ground. At each corner is a medallion with a burnet moth. The splendid doublures have a central panel with a large iris and poppies on an imitation tortoiseshell ground. The borders bear the surah al-Baqara (ii), verses 235–7 on the front doublure, and four different short prayers for recitation on concluding the Qur'an on the back doublure in gold riqā' on a green ground between narrow bands of a repeating diaper pattern in gold on a red ground.

The births of a certain Mirza Muhammad Khan, known as Aqa-yi Buzurg, in Dhul-Hijjah 1320 (AD 1902), and Mirza Lutf'ali Khan, known as Aqayi Kuchak, in Dhul-Hijjah 1321 (AD 1903), are recorded on folio 22: these notes were added long after the births occurred, since the first is referred to as Haji Mirza Muhammad Khan, with the words al-shabīr bi-Aqa-yi Buzurg ('known as the great Aqa') added above it. Folios 1a and 2a bear traces of a rectangular library seal in purple-blue ink with a date, possibly AH 1339 (AD 1920–21).
The Nasir al-Din Shah period
The Nasir al-Din Shah period
فلا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له، لاتعب أبداً كافرون. لا إله إلا الله، وحده لا شريك له. لا إله إلا الله، وحده لا شريك له، وأنت الله، لا إله إلاك. سلم على محمد وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم. دينل نصاً وفعلنا. ما أغني عنه من الله ما كتب. يا محمد، صلى الله عليه وسلم.
The Nasir al-Din Shah period
Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, AH 1066 (AD 1655-6) (main text); Shiraz AH 1278 (AD 1861-2) (marginal notes and illumination)

This copy of the Qur'an was originally copied in a neat naskh with various reading marks in small red letters on a gold-sprinkled ground, in AH 1066 (AD 1655-6) and was re-margined with marginal notes added in AH 1278 (AD 1861-2), illuminated and given a lacquered cover. However, apart from the main text area and the use of whorls for marking verses, it bears, in appearance, all the characteristics of a Qajar Qur'an though with certain unusual features. These include a list of the names of different readers, some marginal notes explaining readings according to various authorities, and marking every fifth and tenth verse with the letters kha (for khams) and 'ayn (for 'ashar) in gold riqa' in the margins.

The manuscript opens with a double-page illuminated spread (folios 1b-2a) bearing the names of the readers of the Qur'an in the central panel. The names of 21 readers are written in red riqa' in uncoloured compressed eight-pointed stars alternating with densely illuminated crosses in polychrome. The margins are decorated with scrolling gold leaves and blossoms outlined in black with occasional touches of dark blue and red. Folios 2b-2a contain the index to the Qur'an written in red riqa' on plain gold eight-pointed stars, alternating with illuminated crosses similar to those on the preceding spread. The margins are identical to those offolios 1b-2a except that more colour is used.

The double-page illuminated spread on folios 3b-4a bears the prayer to be recited on recommencing the Qur'an, written in red and blue riqa' on a plain gold ground in the central lobed medallions and set in a field decorated with knot patterns, flowers and leaves in gold, outlined in black with touches of polychrome on an uncoloured ground. The pendants and corner-pieces are densely decorated in polychrome. The margins are decorated with florets and leaves in gold outlined in black with polychrome accents. The densely illuminated double-page spread on folios 4b-5a is typical of Qur'ans copied during the reign of Nasir al-Din Shah in Shiraz, and is similar in colour and motifs to those of cat. 22 (folios 4b-5a) and cat. 24 (folios 2b-3a), possibly from the same workshop. Surah headings are all of the Qajar period. Titles are written in blue and red riqa' on plain gold cartouches set in densely illuminated panels similar to those on folios 4b-5a.

There are two types of marginal notes in this Qur'an, one written in naskh with references in carmine-red, which give variant readings (qira'ah) according to different readers. The alternative reading is given, followed by individual letters in red—an abbreviation for the name of the authority. Such a practice is uncommon in Iranian copies of the Qur'an, particularly under the Qajars. The science of qira'ah deals with the recitation, punctuation and vocalization of the text. There are usually ten authorized readers and when their variant readings are given in the text, a chart provides a key to understanding the abbreviations. In this copy, the key chart is not included even though 21 readers are named. As a result, it is difficult to say which is which. David James suggested that a Qur'an which includes such variations in qira'ah was probably used by scholars for teaching purposes in a mosque or a madrasas. The inclusion of both readings and naskh indicates is particularly interesting. If James is correct, this emphasizes the widespread use of divination in 19th-century Iran, even amongst clerics. The other marginal notes are in fine nasta'liq and give the verses of reciting each surah according to the Shī'ī Imams. All marginal notes are written in naskh, except in a few cases where some Arabic letters are included. Catchwords are in naskh.

Text divisions include jaz' and half-jaz' in tear-shaped cartouches and bi'ah in almond-shaped devices on plain gold grounds bordered with flame-like motifs and finials in gold and colours outlined in black. The number of each jaz' is in numerals instead of letters and there are no sajidab markers.
The Nasir al-Din Shah period

The title of each surah is written in blue riqâ’ on the top corner of each ‘a’ folio while the full indications for divination are written in the top left corner of ‘b’ folios. Both are marked with gold leaves outlined in black with touches of colour. Abbreviated forms for istikhârah are written at the outer corner of the outer frames.

A note by a certain Haydar Quli Qajar Arin-Fishnat on folio 11 states that it entered his library in AH 1331 (AD 1912–13) and it is marked as ‘number 1’.

The covers are lacquered with a flower-and-bird composition on a gold-sprinkled ground in the central panel. The borders are narrow gold-ruled bands decorated with small rosettes on a green ground and gold leaves on a red ground. The doublures are decorated with blossoms, flowers, a bird, a butterfly and a bee on a plain gold ground bordered with narrow gold-ruled bands decorated with scrolling flowerheads on a black ground and with gold dots on red. The lacquer work also resembles covers made in Shiraz.
24

Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, Shiraz, Rab’ 1279 (December 1862–January 1863)

316 folios, 30.5 x 18.5 cm, with 14 lines to the page
Material A thin, very crisp, cream, lightly burnished paper, laid, with approximately 14 laid lines to the centimetre and no apparent rib shadows or chain lines, similar to those of cat. 22 and 27

Text area 21.1 x 15.1 cm
Script main text in naskh; the index and prayers, surah titles, marginal text divisions, sakhb and colophon in naskh; interlinear Persian translation and marginal texts in nasta’līq

Illumination Extensive decoration on folios 19–20, 21, 22, 23 and 34–35; text frames of narrow gold and red bands, light blue, green, black, gold and dark blue rules; outer frames of black, gold and red rules; verses marked by six-stranded gold rosettes (occasionally changing into gold discs) outlined in black with radii and dots; interlinear decoration in gold on folios 2–5, 12, 16 and 18–19; surah headings; marginal text divisions and sakhb (marginal) ornaments, similar to the text at the top of each page; marginal texts in gold panels

Patron Haj Mirda Nasrallah Khan

Documented Two colophons

Binding Contemporary lacquer

Accession no. Q118 264

Published Sotheby’s, Geneva, 25 June 1981, lot 55; Christie’s, London, 22 November 1986, lot 95

5. A lacquer cover signed ḫūshāb, which according to Katrizadeh refers to Ḥabib Allah Shirazi lacquer painter; Katrizadeh 1986–91, p.351.

This is one of the finest copies of the Qur’an in the Collection, with dense and varied illumination in gold and polychrome. The manuscript begins with a double-page illuminated spread (folios 18–22) with lobed medallions and pendants bearing the prayer to be recited before commencing the Qur’an, with instructions in Persian as to how and when it should be recited in red riqā’i. The prayer itself is written in pale blue, outlined in black on a gold ground, decorated with unusual green scrollwork. The field on which these are set is decorated with bold gold arabesques, filled with small flowers and leaves in polychrome. The arabesques are set on a similarly decorated field on a dark-blue ground. The corner-pieces contain slightly larger flowers in polychrome on a gold ground. The main panel is bordered by a band on which the index to the Qur’an is written in eight-pointed gold stars, set on a lapis-blue illuminated ground. The margins are also densely illuminated, mainly in gold, outlined in black, with featherly leaves and blossoms in red, gold and dark blue on an uncoloured ground, with the centres of the larger blossoms in pink and pale blue. The margins are edged with modest blue tassels.

Surah al-Fatīhah (1) and the beginning of surah al-Baqarah (2) are written on another double-page spread, which is even more densely illuminated (folios 22–23). The zigzag headpieces are in dark blue, two shades of gold, and fine gold arabesque scrolls on an uncoloured ground with crenellated borders in a similar colour scheme. The text panels are framed by bands of interlace and scrolling arabesque in gold on a black ground (a novelty here). The Qur’anic text, as on the following spread (folios 23–4), is written in naskh in clouds reserved against plain gold, set in gold-ruled panels. Folios 32, 42 and 22 are the only pages where the background of the main text is decorated with delicate gold illumination. The remainder of the Qur’anic text is written in black- and gold-ruled panels, with the Persian translation in red nasta’līq in uncoloured narrow bands. No reading instructions are given. Catchwords are in naskh. Errors, and various omissions from the written text, were made good in the margins in two distinct stages, once before the ruling was done (for example, folios 96b, 136a, 235b and 248b) and once after (for example, folios 31a, 106b, 122a and 280b). In other places the mistakes were erased and rewritten (for example, folios 146b and 147b). In these cases, the instructions for corrections are in a minute nasta’līq hand outside the khamar. Traces of notes for omissions to be recited (folios 230b and 238b) and the text divisions (folios 171a and 186b) can still be seen in some of the margins. The text divisions, written in riqā’i on a gold ground, employ three different devices, in the novel: ovals of various sizes, sometimes almost circular in shape (for example, folio 47a), which are used for bīzāb; inverted pear-shaped devices for juz’; and arched cartouches for nīṣf. These were illuminated in two stages, and most probably by two artists. The first produced the original devices and used pale blue, white or lapis-blue outlined in black; the second did the subsequent additions in gold and red (folios 30b and 42a). In the original markings, the ovals are edged with a band of illumination in polychrome, with further rays of gold, green and red, while the pear-shaped medallions are edged with curved petals or flame-like motifs in pink and pale blue. They all have illuminated finials, some more elaborate than others (folio 24a, for example).

Surah titles are in white, pale blue or pink riqā’i on gold cartouches decorated with green scrollwork, set in richly illuminated panels in polychrome and gold. At the top of each page in the centre is a gold trefoil motif, outlined in black, with dark-blue finials. The title of the surah is written on the ‘i’ folios, and the juz’ number on the ‘a’ folios, both in red riqā’. Similar devices are used in cat. 28. Persian traditions on the virtues of reading each surah, according to Shi‘i Imams, are written in nasta’līq in clouds reserved against plain gold forming vertical cartouches. A narrow strip of a different paper is used at the gutter and black rules are drawn along the joints, as in cat. 22.

The final two pages (folios 314b–315a) are divided into registers. The last two surahs are written in clouds reserved against gold, crowned by illuminated headings and head-pieces in
The Nasir al-Din Shah period

gold and polychrome; the colophon, which occupies the lower part of folios 316b–317a, is written in two broad cartouches in red ink on a plain gold ground, set in illuminated panels in gold and polychrome. Folios 315b–316b were ruled, but left blank. A note on folio 316b has been erased.

The colophon gives the name of the patron as Mirza Nasrullah Khan. Although there were several high officials with that name, only one could properly be described with the titles given in the colophon, namely Mirza Nasrullah Khan Nuri (AH 1322–8/A.D. 1507–63), later known as Mirza Aqa Khan, with the title of Imam al-Dawlah (AH 1326/A.D. 1508–9). He began his career as a paymaster (lashkar-navis) in the army, and later rose to become the Paymaster-General (lashkar-navis haqiqi). He was disgraced and exiled to Kashan between AH 1326 and 1327 (A.D. 1507–8). Through his connections with the British—he even held a British passport, which he had to give up, however—in order to become Prime Minister (sadr-i-iqmam)—and through his intimacy with Nasir al-Din Shah’s mother, he returned to favour and was appointed Prime Minister in AH 1328 (A.D. 1509). He was dismissed in AH 1327 (A.D. 1508) for treasonable conduct after signing two treaties with the British (AH 1326/A.D. 1507 and AH 1327/A.D. 1508), under which Iran suffered considerable territorial losses. Banished, he moved from Yazd to Isfahan some time around AH 1329 (A.D. 1510–11), and then in AH 1329 (A.D. 1511–12) from Isfahan to Qum, where he died.² His disgrace explains the absence of any official titles here, and it is possible that he commissioned this splendid Qur’an in partial atonement for his misdemeanours. The date of the commission is not known, but it was evidently completed during his banishment, either in Yazd or in Isfahan. The paper, illumination and rulings are all Shirazi work, very similar to cat. 22 and 23, as well as to the illumination of a Qur’an by ‘Ali Asgar Arsanjani.³ This Qur’an seems to mark a stylistic transition between cat. 22 and 23. Its rulings, some of the illumination and paper are similar to those of cat. 22, while other illumination and the marginal devices resemble those of cat. 28.

Muhammad Sadiq is, unsurprisingly, an unrecorded scribe who may have worked in Shiraz; a well-known scribe may not have wished to be associated with a statesman in disgrace. The only other known work of his is a copy of the Qur’an dated AH 1316 (A.D. 1504–5).⁴

The colophon of the marginal Persian commentaries is written at the end of the final commentary (folio 315b). The scribe, ‘Ali Riza al-Husayni, is probably to be identified with ‘Ali Riza of the Husayni sayyids of Shiraz, the grandson of Mirza Muhammad Kalantar, ‘The Mayor’, and the author of a history book called Rûznâmeh-yi Kalantar. He was one of the scribes of Shiraz, and the private scribe to Prince Farhad Mirza Muhtamid al-Dawlah, the governor of Fars, for whom he copied many manuscripts. His recorded works date between AH 1294 (A.D. 1877–8) and AH 1297 (A.D. 1879–80), and he often signs himself as the grandson of the late Mirza Muhammad Kalantar. He was still alive in AH 1304 (A.D. 1887–8).⁵

Bayani lists two pieces by ‘Ali Riza al-Husayni, the son of Sayyid Sharif al-Shirazi, as probably the work of this scribe as well: the Persian marginal texts on the virtues of reading each surah on a Qur’an dated Raja 1277 (March 1859); and a Drutn of Magribi dated Dhul-Hijjah 1280 (May 1863).⁶ These would extend his working life from AH 1274 (A.D. 1857) to AH 1297 (A.D. 1879–80). A copy of the Gurcanat of Sadi in the Khalili Collection (MS 926) dated AH 1269 (A.D. 1852–5) with Shirazi-style lacquered covers has similar illuminations, as does a Qur’an copied by ‘Ali Asgar Arsanjani in AH 1313 (A.D. 1896–7), with lacquer covers painted by Lutf‘al-Shirazi in AH 1318 (A.D. 1891).⁷

The central panel of the lacquered covers contains a lavish floral arrangement in a brown lobed cartouche, with corner-pieces illuminated with gold flowers and leaves on a black ground. This is bordered by two narrow bands with gold flowers and leaves, on a red and green ground. The doublures are decorated with a single iris and a small poppy on a plain red ground with gold-rules borders.
25 Single-volume Qur'an
Iran, AH 128[5] (AD 1863–4)

257 folios, 10 × 6.3 cm,
with 19 lines to the page
Material A thin, cream/grey,
lightly burnished paper, laid,
with approximately 11 laid lines
to the centimetre and no apparent
to shadow on chain lines
Text area 9.2 × 5.4 cm
Script Main text in naskh, with
reading instructions in red; surah
titles, marginal text divisions and
sajdah, and divination indications
in red riqa'
Illumination Extensive decoration
on folios 29–32, less extensive on
folios 35–44; text frame of a narrow
gold band, black and gold rules;
outer frame of black and gold
rules; text area sprinkled with gold,
interlinear gold patches on
folios 28–31; verses marked by gold
lozenges outlined in black with
radii and dots; surah headings in
illuminated panels; ornamental
devices in the top centre marking
surah titles and divination indications;
marginal devices marking text
divisions and sajdab
Documentation A date
Binding Contemporary lacquer
Accession no. QUR.68
Published Khalili, Robinson &
Stanley 1996–7, part two, no. 429

This small Qur'an is written in neat naskh on a fine, gold-sprinkled ground. Text divisions
and sajdah are in red riqa' in gold devices, some outlined with blue and all edged
with flame-like motifs, highlighted with touches of colours and with illuminated finials.
Unlike many Iranian Qur'ans, this copy does not give bizz indications. Surah titles are
in red riqa' on plain gold cartouches set in illuminated panels in gold, lapis-blue and red.
Catchwords are in naskh. Devices similar to the marginal ones, but less elaborate, are
placed at the top of each page giving the title of the surah on the 'a' folios, and full indica-
tions for izzikhatab on the 'b' folios; a few are left blank, or are in devices of different
shape, as on folios 172b and 173b.

The manuscript opens with a double-page illuminated spread, on which the prayer
to be recited before commencing the Qur'an (folio 1b) and the method of performing
izzikhatab 'according to His Holiness [Imam] Sadq' (folio 2a) are written in the shape of
a cypress tree, outlined in gold and edged with flame-like motifs, with touches of red,
and set in double gold-ruled panels. The main text begins with a double-page spread of
illumination (folios 28–30). Although the principal colours used are the same as in many
mid-19th-century Qur'ans, the motifs are different. The borders are decorated with pairs
of conspicuously lobed leaves in gold and corner-pieces on a lapis-blue ground, and are
edged with gold strapwork. The text is framed with a broad band of plain gold and a red
band decorated with yellow arabesques. The same red band is used to separate the marginal
illumination from the panels above and below the text, which give the surah titles and
surah al-Waqi'ah (157), verses 79–80. The borders of the following pages (folios 31–44)
are illuminated with florlets and scrolling leaves in gold outlined in black, with touches of
red on an uncoloured ground. The copyist's errors have been erased, and the gaps filled
with fine gold leaves (folios 211a, 212a). The main text is followed, on folio 211b, by a short
prayer to be recited on concluding the Qur'an, and ends with the date: saka 128 (The
year 128[5] [AD 1863–4]).

The lacquer covers bear exceptionally fine spiral arabesque scrollwork on a dark-green
ground, with a narrow border of gold strapwork and repeating scrolls in gold on black.
The doublures are red and are decorated in gold with a framing motif in European taste,
with a border of gold scrollwork on a black ground.

Although the manuscript is unsigned, the hand is of high quality. The similarities in
the treatment of the covers and the illumination of the Qur'an, and the absence of names,
raise the possibility that the scribe, the illuminator and the lacquer painter may have been
one and the same person, and that it was his personal copy.
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separate the marginal
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ages (folios 16–42)
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and the gaps filled
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the absence of names,
sinter may have been
This Qur'an is written in clear, rather large naksh. The entire text is in clouds reserved against plain gold. Reading instructions are not provided. Text divisions are given in richly illuminated devices in gold and polychrome with elaborate finials. These, like the writing, are large compared to those found in other contemporary Qur'an manuscripts. Similarly illuminated devices are used on the 's' folios for the surah title and on the 'b' folios for the sitkkhabab indications. Catchwords are in naksh. Surah titles are written in gold riga' on red or lapis-blue cartouches decorated with gold scrollwork, mostly set in illuminated panels in gold and colour. Traces of indications for the text divisions and sitkkhabab are visible in the margins. The manuscript begins with surah al-Fathah (1) and the beginning of surah al-Baqara (2) on a double-page illuminated spread (folios 1b–2a), mainly in gold, lapis-blue and deep red, with gold zigzag borders and half-medallions with split palmettes on a blue ground densely sown with florets with white highlights. The text is written in clouds, on a ground of fine floral scrolls, reserved against gold, which on folios 1b–2a are outlined in black. The surah titles on this opening are in lapis-blue on plain gold cartouches, set in illuminated panels. The borders are edged with tassels, alternately in blue and red. The margins of folios 3b–4a are illuminated with swirling gold feathery leaves and flowers, outlined in black and highlighted in polychrome, with the additional application of blue, purple and green on an uncoloured ground. Text division markers are richly illuminated, and, like the script, they are disproportionately large for the size of the Qur'an. Folio 2a was originally intended to bear the index of the Qur'an, and squares were ruled but not filled in. The page was later pasted over, but the squares are visible against the light. The main text is followed directly by the colophon (folio 32a), which records that the Qur'an was completed by order of the Paymaster of the Forces (Amin-i Lashkar), Mirza Qahraman, the deputy governor of the province of Azarbayjan in the year 1283 (AD 1866–7). According to Bamdad, Mirza Qahraman (AH 1244–1310/AD 1828–93) began his career as a financial secretary attached to the Azarbayjan garrison and was promoted to Chief Accountant of the forces in AH 1279 (AD 1862–3). He was awarded the titles Mubir-i Lashkar in AH 1283 (AD 1865–6) and Amin-i Lashkar in AH 1284 (AD 1867–8). This Qur'an clearly shows that he had received this title at least a year before it was written. He held his post in Azarbayjan until AH 1285 (AD 1868–9), when he was disgraced, but he returned to favour in AH 1288 (AD 1871–2) and became Master of the Household to Prince Murzafar al-Din, accompanying Nasir al-Din Shah on his first trip to Europe in AH 1293 (AD 1874). He was appointed Minister of Customs and Revenues in Tehran on more than one occasion, but he came under suspicion because of irregularities in the accounts, and all his property was confiscated. In AH 1302 (AD 1884–5) his finances were again under scrutiny, and he took refuge in the house of Mirza 'Ali Asghar Khan, Amin al-Sultan whose intercession saved him from paying the full amount of his defalcations.1

A tradition reported from Imam Ja'far relating to the accumulation of wealth is written in a casual shakastab on folio 32b. The note in the margins has been erased, which makes it difficult to follow the text. Mirza Qahraman's connection with Mirza 'Ali Asghar Khan and the damaged notes remind one of cat.64, which was sent by Hakim al-Mulk to Mirza 'Ali Asghar Khan.

The paper, text frame and outer borders are similar to those of cat.22 and 24 produced in Shiraz, but the illumination is closer to that in cat.2, which was produced in Azerbaijan. This suggests that this Qur'an was copied for sale in Shiraz, and was bought and taken to Azerbaijan, where it was illuminated by order of Mirza Qahraman in AH 1283 (AD 1866–7). This may explain the absence of the word 'copied' in the colophon, as in the Qur'ans acquired by the Talpur Mirs.
produced in the period of Al-Ma'mun (813-833). The Qura'an was commissioned by Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Sulayman Al-Khulafa, one of the caliphs of the Umayyad dynasty. The book is written in Kufic script and is illuminated with gold and silver on a red ground. The margins are black in color and contain calligraphy.
This Qur'an strongly resembles cat. 24 in size, the number of lines, surah headings, text divisions, verse markers and border illumination, the choice of colours for surah headings, and the decoration of the lacquer cover and the doublure. These similarities all point to its production in the same workshop, evidently at Shiraz.

The manuscript opens with a double-page of illumination (folios 1b–2a), containing the index of the Qur'an written in red and white riqā’. Alternate lines, in octagonal gold cartouches, set on a lapis-blue ground densely filled with small flowers and with lotus leaves at the centre in polychrome. The heading for this section is written in gold outlined in black on a gold ground of a different shade, set in a finely illuminated panel. The borders are decorated with feather-like leaves and blossoms, also in various shades of gold outlined in black, interspersed with small cartouches in lapis-blue, red and gold on an uncoloured ground, and edged with blue tassels. The following double-page spread of illumination (folios 2b–3a) bears the prayer to be recited on commencing the Qur'an, written in gold riqā’ on lapis-blue lotus leaves decorated with gold scrollwork. The cartouches are surrounded by successive bands of floral and foliate illumination. Those illuminated in polychrome are on gold or lapis-blue grounds, and those in gold, with mere touches of colour, are on an uncoloured ground. The borders are decorated with leaves and florets in gold, outlined in black (exactly as in cat. 24) with polychrome highlights and tasselled edging in blue and red. Surah al-Fātihah (1) and the beginning of surah al-Baqara (2) occupy another double-page illuminated spread (folios 3b–4a), with a head-piece and border predominantly in gold and lapis-blue. The main text on these pages is written in gold reserved against black, and has a conspicuous black frame with fine palmettes in gold.

The entire Qur'an is written in neat naskh, set in gold-ruled panels. The interlinear Persian translations are in red nastaʿlīq in narrow bands. Both the main text and the translation have fine gold scrolls in the background, more extensively in the main text area. Catchwords are in naskh. Illuminated gold leaves with touches of colour are drawn inside the upper corners of the kama'ād, giving the surah title on the 'a' folios and full indications for isṭikbārāt on the 'b' folios. Sarah titles are written in white, light blue, pink or red riqā’ on plain gold cartouches set in illuminated bands of polychrome and gold. Text divisions are given in variously shaped devices in red or white riqā’ on a plain gold ground, edged with flame-like motifs in blue, green and red, and with illuminated finials, similar to those of cat. 6. Verses are marked with illuminated rosettes, occasionally terminating in a leaf (for example, folio 34b). Traditions concerning the virtues of reciting each chapter are written in Persian in the margins in shikastāb in clouds reserved against gold, forming variously shaped cartouches with finials and often edged with similar flame motifs to those of the text divisions.

The text ends with a short prayer, which is followed by the colophon on folio 372a dated Sha'bān 1285 (November–December 1868). The narrow bands provided earlier for the Persian translation are here decorated with foliate scrolls in gold. In the colophon, the patron is described as ‘the progeny of sayyids’. A certain Mirza Muhammad Riza Mustawfi is mentioned by Fāsi as one of five officials summoned from Shiraz to Tehran in March–April 1863, when the governorship of the province of Fars was conferred on Mas'ud Mirza Zill al-Sultan. In the same year that he completed this Qur'an manuscript, the scribe, Mirza Ali Shirazi, finished another copy for Mirza Hasan Ali Khan. His only other recorded work is a Qur'an dated aḥ 1224 (AD 1857), which is illuminated in the same style as other Shirazi manuscripts such as cat. 22 and 24. He is not otherwise recorded. The only information to be gathered from his colophons is that his father's name was Muhammad, and that he was commissioned by two Shirazis.
The Nasir al-Din Shah period

The front cover is lacquered with a composition of flowers and birds on a gold-sprinkled ground in the central panel. The margins have cartouches depicting flowers on gold set on a green ground decorated with gold leaves. The borders are narrow gold-ruled bands decorated with scrolling gold leaves on a black ground. The doublele of the front cover is decorated with an iris and poppies, a butterfly and a bee with a gold-ruled band decorated with scrolling gold leaves on a black ground. The style of the front cover resembles work attributed to Shiraz. The back cover and flap are made of modern olive-green leather.
This large, beautifully written and finely illuminated Qur’an was copied in Shiraz for an ex-minister of Fars, Mirza Abu’l-Hasan Khan, Mushir al-Mulk. The manuscript opens with a double-page spread (folios 1b–2a) of illumination bearing the index to the Qur’an, written in bright red riqa’ on plain gold discs, on a lapis-blue surround decorated with white leaf-scrolls. The quatrefoil devices in between the roundels are decorated with flowers and scrolls on a gold ground. The borders are decorated with bold lapis-blue arabesque scrolls filled with flowers in polychrome, very similar to those in cat. 22. The surrounding field is decorated with gold flowers and leaves outlined in black on an uncoloured ground, bordered with gold, green and black rules and edged by blue tassels. The following double-page spread (folios 2b–3a) is richly illuminated in gold and polychrome. Surah al-Fatiha (1) and the beginning of surah al-Baqara (2:1) are written in the central panel in clouds reserved against gold and decorated with scrolling flowers and leaves in polychrome. Finely drawn gold scrolls and leaves are used to decorate the clouds. Large panels above and below the text contain surah titles and the surah al-Waqi’a (51), verses 77–80. These are written in gold riqa’ outlined in black, within gold cartouches decorated with fine scrolls, flowers and leaves in black, and in black. The panels are decorated with cartouches densely filled with florals, alternately on a gold and on a lapis-blue ground. The sides of the panels of the text area are decorated with lobed gold cartouches on a lapis-blue ground, all filled with flowers, leaves and scrolls. A black band decorated with arabesque scrolls and cartouches forms the inner kamand. The calligraphic border consists of reciprocal lappets in gold or lapis-blue, decorated with floral scrolls in polychrome.

Surah titles are written in red riqa’ on an uncoloured ground in cartouches set in gold panels decorated with lapis-blue scrolls and leaves. Many of these panels have additional lobed cartouches decorated with gold flowers and leaves outlined in black on an uncoloured ground (folios 182b–28a, for example). The heading for the surah Al’Imran (111) on folio 244 is different from the others, in that the surah title is written in gold riqa’ outlined in black, in a cartouche with spiral scrolling arabesques in gold, set in an illuminated panel in gold and polychrome. The verse markers are particularly ornate, consisting of small gold six-petalled rosettes outlined in black on a plain gold disc and edged with large gold petals outlined in black. The petals of those on folios 2b–3a are highlighted in green and red. Different shades of gold are used in the verse markers. Text divisions are marked in the margins by gold-illuminated devices. These devices consist of a roundel for juz’, a half-roundel for mid-juz’ and a small roundel for bisah. These, as well as the waqfah markers, consist of roundels in which the text is in red riqa’ on an uncoloured ground; they are edged with gold petals, similar to those of the verse markers, and have fine finials. These devices are particularly elaborate up to folio 254 with the text written in gold riqa’, outlined in black, set on a ground of gold scrolls on an uncoloured ground, and bordered with a dart-like pattern in lapis-blue, green and red and finials in gold and lapis-blue, all outlined in gold. The middle of the Qur’an is marked with a double-page spread (folios 138b–139a) of illumination, with only six lines of text per page set in black and gold-rulled panels, written in clouds decorated with gold leaves, and reserved against plain gold. The narrow interlinear bands are decorated with gold leaves in a repeating design. The headpiece and the panels below the text area consist of combinations of arabesque scrolls and flowers in different shades of gold, all outlined in black and bordered by bands of floral and foliate scrolls and leaves also in gold outlined in black on an uncoloured ground. The panels are separated by narrow gold, green and red bands and black rules. The borders are illuminated in gold, with bold scrolling blossoms and feathery leaves on an uncoloured
10. For his other published work, see Bayani 1341-42, iii, p. 754, Gulchin 1347-48, no. 203; Najafi 1389, pp. 73-4, pl. 31 and 32; Sotheby's, London, 15 October 1997, lot 18; Arabic 1351, no. 14.

ground. The two roundels in the margins read: 'naf al-qur'an-ibn-bah al-burajif ('The middle of the Qur'an based on its letters'), indicating that the copyist must have counted them. A wreath of gold leaves outlined in black at the upper centre of each page contains the title of the surah, written in red 'riqa'. Similar gold leaves are used in the upper corners of the 'kaman'. Those on the 'b' folios are left blank, but must have been meant for 'sitakhabir' indications. Those on the 'a' folios indicate the 'jez'. The manuscript was paginated (a rather unusual practice) in red in the margin at the top of each page, starting on folio 1b and finishing on folio 28a with the figure 370. Catchwords are written in small naskh.

The marginal Persian texts written in small naskh give the virtues of reciting each chapter according to the Prophet, except for four when Imam Sadiq is quoted (folios 69b, 81a, 114a and 284a). These are bordered with a band of gold illumination similar to the interlinear bands on folios 134b-135a, forming vertical cartouches, cusped at the top and the bottom, similar to those in cat. 6, which was also copied in Shiraz. Occasionally, for lack of space, the scribe ends the comments in small shikastah (folios 231a, 287b, 288b), or starts the text in 'riqa' (folios 21a-28a, for example), which shows his mastery of different styles. Towards the end, red is used to pick out certain phrases (folios 23b-28a). The tradition on the surah Yā-lā (36v) is the longest, and covers the margins of folio 20a and most of folio 20b.

The main text of the Qur'an is followed by five different prayers (folios 28a-28b) identified by the Persian directions for reading them in red 'riqa'. These prayers are followed by a long flowery colophon in Arabic with eulogies in Persian verse. The scribe has ingeniously composed two chronograms for the date, from the letters of the day on which the copying of the manuscript was begun and finished, 'ayd ghadit, and from the letters in surah al-Waqi'ah (6:6), verses 77 and 79, although he has miscalculated with those letters that are pronounced as double but are indicated only by a shaddah.

The patron, Haj Mirza Abu'l-Hassan Khan Shirazi, known as Mushir al-Mulk II (AH 1226-1300/AD 1811-85), was appointed Minister of Fars on his father's death in AH 1262 (AD 1845-6) and held the office on six different occasions over almost thirty years with absolute power, until AH 1319 (AD 1897), when Farhad Mirza, Muhammad al-Dawlah became the governor. Abu'l-Hassan Khan, Mushir al-Mulk was then removed from office and even imprisoned. On his release, he made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and after his return led a simple life until the day of his death. He was married to one of the daughters of Muhammad 'Ali Fajat, a leader of the Baha'i movement which had been banned in Shiraz. The Mushir Mosque at Shiraz was one of his charitable foundations. He also commissioned 'Ali As'kar Arsanjani, the father of Muhammad Shafi, to complete the Sāhib al-kāmilah copied by Ahmad Nayarizi, in the Khailali Collection (mss 386). He commissioned a Qur'an copied by Ghulam'ali Isfahani and dated AH 1267 (AD 1850-51), with marginal texts by Mahmud Hakim, the scribe of the marginal texts of cat. 22.

In his Āthār-i ʿAjami, the author, Farsad al-Dawlah Shirazi, states that Arsanjani lay to the east of Shiraz and lists among its men of note 'Ali As'kar, the scribe of cat. 14 and mss 386, and his son, al-Haj Mul a Muhammad Shafi', who had the pen-name (sakhlal) Āthār. The latter 'laboured long in the Arabic and in the Persian literary sciences until he became one of the most accomplished men of his time. He surpassed his father in writing aṣbīh ... and all agree that naskh of this quality had not been written by anyone since the late Ahmad Navirizi. At present (circa AH 1315/AD 1896), he is occupied in copying Qur'ans and writing poems, and has particular taste in ghazals ... ' M.H. Senssar states further that Muhammad Shafi' was born in AH 1253 (AD 1837) and that he was a painter as well as a scribe; he also wrote khaṣṣ-ī-nakhḥun ('nail writing').

The Nasir al-Din Shah period
Muhammad Shafi was the most accomplished calligrapher of the Qajar period. He worked in Shiraz, and wrote all styles well. Many of his recorded works were commissions, and they include a Qur'an ordered by a certain Shirazi Mustawfi, who presented it to Muzaffar al-Din Shah. His published work explains his high standing among the calligraphers of Shiraz. Cat.28 exemplifies his varied skills, not only in his use of all the different styles of calligraphy practised in his time, but in his mastery of literary style in composing the colophon. The size, styles of calligraphy, illumination and covers make this manuscript a paradigm of the arts of the book in the second half of the 19th century, and not only the largest that Muhammad Shafi copied but the largest recorded Qajar Qur'an.

Muhammad Shafi's recorded works, which include copies of the Qur'an and calligraphic pages, are dated between AH 1283 (AD 1866–7) and AH 1322 (AD 1904). This means that he served under at least two Qajar rulers. Only in one of his colophons, that of a page of calligraphy, does he give his pen-name, Athar. The illumination of a Qur'an by him dated AH 1283 (AD 1866–7) sold at Sotheby's closely resembles that of cat.24, by Muhammad Sadiq al-Husayni, and the head-piece of folios 134b–135a of cat.28. His Qur'ans were evidently all illuminated in the same workshop, for all have the gold arabesque scrolls on an uncoloured ground. They are practically all of large format.

The lacquer covers are decorated with a bird, flower and butterfly composition in an oval frame set in a rectangular border. The border is of repeating floral sprays set between narrow scrolling bands with posies at each corner, all on black grounds except for a narrow band of rose-heads and leaves on a gold-sprinkled ground. The doublures are divided into two sections: the central panels contain a long prayer, the Dua'-yi sabah, in black naskh on a honey-coloured ground, followed by another prayer with instructions in Persian in red, to prostrate oneself and recite it and the commentary on it attributed to 'Ali. The borders are decorated with bold floral and foliate scrolls on a black ground, which are markedly Safavid in appearance. The designs used in the margins are identical to those of the double page marking the middle of the Qur'an, and the inscriptions could well be in the hand of Muhammad Shafi.
The Nasir al-Din Shah period

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Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, Qum, Rabi’ al-Thani 1302 (January–February 1883)

This modest Qur'an written in neat naskh was commissioned by one of the most influential figures in the political history of Iran, Mirza 'Ali Asghar Khan Amin al-Sultan, and was copied in Qum by an undocumented but prolific scribe, Zayn al-Abidin Mahallati.

The manuscript starts with the surah al-Fatihah (1) and the beginning of surah al-Baqarah (2), written in clouds reserved against gold, set in a double-page spread of illumination mainly in gold, lapis-blue and red (folios 1b–2a). The tawwibi indicates that poured silver (doubleless added to the gold ink to create a different shade) was used in the illumination. The marginal illumination of these folios consists of gold and silver scrolling split-palmettes outlined in black on an uncoloured ground with blue composite cartouches filled with small flowers in polychrome. The head-piece combines split-palmettes and flowers on a gold or blue ground, with a zigzag coping edged with featherly leaves. The surah titles are in red 'aqqa on gold cartouches decorated with fine blue leaves, set in lapis-blue cartouches decorated with flowers in polychrome and gold arabesque scrolls. Catchwords are in small naskh.

The marginal text division markers and their finials are particularly ornate, often with sparing use of colour. In general, the illumination of this Qur'an is refined but simpler than, and stylistically different from, other contemporary examples. Whether the variations demonstrate a different workshop — perhaps in Qum — or the personal choice of the patron is difficult to say. The modest surah headings in the rest of the manuscript, the ruling, the limited use of colour, the use of a variety of rosettes and whorls as verse markers, and the absence of divination indications and of prayers at the beginning and the end, all suggest that this Qur'an was specially copied for a client with particular tastes. The reading marks occur only at the beginning (folios 1b–2a), which gives the manuscript an unfinished appearance, but its plainness is more likely to be the result of a specific order, rather than from incompleteness.

The main text is followed by a very short prayer and a gold-ruling panel (left blank), and then a relatively short colophon (folio 386b) in red 'aqqa. The patron, Mirza 'Ali Asghar Khan (AH 1274–1325/AD 1858–1907), bore the titles of Sāhib-i-'ijām, Amin al-Mulk, Amin al-Sultan and Atūbak-i-dā'īzām. The son of Aqa Ibrahim, Amin al-Sultan, he was granted the rank of major (sarkhān) in AH 1287 (AD 1870–71), and became head of the royal transport in AH 1300 (AD 1882–3) and treasurer of the army in AH 1308 (AD 1890–91). He received the title Amin al-Dawlah in AH 1329 (AD 1891–2). He inherited all his father's posts on the latter's death in AH 1320 (AD 1883), including the title Amin al-Sultan, and new positions as well, becoming influential in practically every government department and with the Shah. In his time he was known as 'the man of Forty-Five Posts'. Among these were the ministries of court, the interior, the treasury, the customs and the royal granaries. Despite his relatively low birth and education, he was credited with intelligence, good memory and shrewdness, as well as a good style of composition and calligraphy, although he was much disliked for his connections with the British. He was eventually appointed Prime Minister (nāwī nā'īzām) in AH 1310 (AD 1893), when he received a robe of honour and all the insignia of his new post, including a ceremonial pen box, which had an inlaid inlay. He was dismissed and reappointed several times. Muzaffar al-Din Shah granted him the title of Atūbak-i-dā'īzām in AH 1318 (AD 1900). Various concessions and monopolies were granted to foreign government and companies during his time in office. His standing with the British was reduced after the treaty of 1892 abolishing the tobacco monopoly, on the insistence of the merchants and the theologians. He transferred his support to the Russians, which eventually led to his assassination in AH 1325 (AD 1907). Amin al-Sultan was responsible for the construction of both religious and public buildings, mainly in Qum and on the road there from Tehran. He was buried in the mausoleum he had built at Qum.

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One of his seals dated AH 1307 (AD 1888–90) with the title amin al-sultan and the name Ali Asgher in Roman letters is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. A pen box in the Khalili Collection made by Razi bears his portrait, which was painted in AH 1303 (AD 1886), a year after the completion of this Qur’an (this was not, however, his ceremonial pen box). A qalqân cup in the Khalili Collection, which was presented to Amin al-Sultan in AH 1319 (AD 1901–2), also bears his portrait, together with that of Muzaffar al-Din Shah. In flattering Persian verses he is addressed as sadr-i a’zam (he had been re-appointed Prime Minister the previous year). This qalqân cup was made by Ghulambusayn, the Shah’s chief enameller (mu’inaktar faqih).

Cat. 29 was copied in Qum when Amin al-Sultan was about 27 years old, and about 17 months after his father’s death, and is likely to have been his first commission following his assumption of the title Amin al-Sultan. His connection with the city of Qum began when his father, Aqa Ibrahim Amin al-Sultan, constructed a new courtyard in the Shrine of Ma’sumeh there. Work had started in AH 1299 (AD 1881–2), but it was still unfinished when his father died the following year, so he allotted 1,000 tâmisus per month for its completion. Fîrâd al-Sultanah in his Rûznamâh mentions that Amin al-Sultan would make an annual pilgrimage to Qum, ‘and it was probably on one of his early visits after his father’s death that he commissioned this Qur’an. A second copy of the Qur’an commissioned by him, in the Shrine Library in Mashhad, is dated AH 1306 (AD 1888–9). There is no contemporary biographical notice of the scribe, Zayn al-Abîdîn, but his father Muhammad ‘Ali Mahallati, who is referred to as a theologian in the colophons of cat. 29 and 30, may be the Mulla Muhammad ‘Ali Mahallati, also from a family of theologians, who took up residence in Shiraz and died in AH 1284 (AD 1867–8). The names of two of his sons, also theologians, are given, but Zayn al-Abîdîn is not one of them. We are not told whether ‘Ali Mahallati had other sons. Our knowledge of Zayn al-Abîdîn thus comes entirely from the colophons of his recorded works, which are dated between AH 1270 (AD 1853–4) and AH 1310 (AD 1911–12). These include Qur’ans, prayer books, religious tracts and calligraphic pages, as well as a Zaynât-nâmeh (prayers to be recited on visiting holy shrines) inscribed on a marble plaque in the Imamzadah Yahya in Tehran. He worked in Tehran, Qum, Mahallati and Isfahan. In the colophon of a selection of surahs from the Qur’an and other prayers he states that he began the manuscript in Tehran and finished it at Mahallati. A Qur’an on the London market (present whereabouts unknown) dated AH 1302 (AD 1884–5) was commissioned by Fîzâd al-Dawlah, the governor of Qum and Kashan. A note in a manuscript describes Zayn al-Abîdîn as well known for his good manners, the master of scribes, Haji Mulla Zayn al-Abîdîn Mahallati. These titles indicate that Zayn al-Abîdîn was a theologian as well.

The Khalili Collection possesses another Qur’an (cat. 50) and two calligraphic pieces. One dated AH 1327 (AD 1909–10) (Cat. 44, ex-catalogue) originally bore as interlinear Persian translation, traces of which are still decipherable. If Zayn al-Abîdîn was the scribe, it shows that he wrote nasîhât as well as nasâb and riqâ. The other (Cat. 24) was copied in Tehran as a warming-up exercise in Ramadan 1292 (October–November: 1873). For this he chose an interesting verse text attributed to Imam ‘Ali:

Learn a good style of writing, O possessor of good breeding,
For writing is but an adornment for the well-bred.
For if you are wealthy, your writing is an adornment,
And if you are needy, it is the best means of earning a livelihood...
A note on the reverse reads: 'Acquired in Tehran in Dhu’l-Qa’dah 1293 (December–January 1875–6)', only two months after he had written it.

Most of Zayn al-‘Abidin’s recorded works were commissions. He copied manuscripts for Muzaffar al-Din Shah and for many noblemen during the reigns of Nasir al-Din Shah and Muzaffar al-Din Shah. He seems to have worked mainly in Tehran, for cat. 29 is his only recorded work copied in Qum.12

On folios 12 and 386b of this Qur’an there are impressions of the seal of the Qajar royal library recording an inspection in AH 1311 (AD 1893–4): manaj’āt ib wa taqīfsh shah sanah 1311 (‘It was viewed and inspected, the year 1311’), the number 118 being written in blue ink. Above the impression is written in blue ink: mardhabzah shud (‘It was viewed’). Inspections regularly took place, but they were particularly thorough following rumours that manuscripts had been abstracted from the library. We know, therefore, that this Qur’an was in the library up to 1893–4. How this manuscript came to be in the palace library without acquiring a dedication to the Shah is something of a mystery, particularly since Amin al-Sultan was Prime Minister in that year.

The outer covers of the Qur’an have a fine overall diaper pattern, executed in gold on a dark red ground and enclosed in a triple border. The doublures are red, with a narrow gold border, and bear two rectangular gold frames, enhanced with scrollwork of European type.14
The Nasir al-Din Shah period
This Qur’an was also copied by Zayn al-‘Abidin Mahallali. Like cat. 29, it was commissioned by a high official, a minister of Zill al-Sultan. The manuscript begins with a double-page spread of illumination (folios 2b–2a). The central panels bear a prayer to be recited before commencing the Qur’an, written in lobed medallions and pendants in gold riqa’ on a lapis-blue ground decorated with spiral gold foliate scrolls. The surrounding field is illuminated with gold arabesques and blossoms outlined in black with coloured highlights on an uncoloured ground. The corner-pieces are lapis-blue with gold for the background. The margins are decorated with scrolling flowers and leaves in gold outlined in black with touches of colour on an uncoloured ground. The narrow bands on either side of the gutter appear half-finished; they lack the black outlines. The main text starts with a richly illuminated double-page spread (folios 2b–3a), with a cartouche border predominantly in lapis-blue and gold but including unusual mauve, turquoise, purple and green shades. The text is written in clouds reserved against gold, the gold being decorated with small flowers and leaves in polychrome. The text panels, surah titles and borders are framed with strapwork bands, with an edging of red and blue tassels in both the margin and the gutter. The following spread (folios 3b–4a) is also written in clouds, but the gold ground is plain. The borders are identical to those of folios 1b–2a.

The entire Qur’an is written in clear naskh. Catchwords are in small naskh. Text divisions are marked in the margins with finely illuminated cartouches and rossettes in gold and polychrome with finishes, similar to those found on cat. 20. Illuminated devices at the top right- or left-hand corner of each page include the title of the chapter (on the ‘a’ folios) and full instructions for using the Qur’an for istihbānah (on the ‘b’ folios), all written in fine red riqa’ on a gold ground, up to folio 41; from then on they give merely the title of the chapter without the word ‘surah’ and the abbreviated version of the istihbānah, written in thick red riqa’. Surah titles are written in gold riqa’ on variously coloured cartouches decorated with gold leaves and scrolls, set in panels richly illuminated in gold and polychrome.

The main text is followed by a short prayer (folio 228a), then the prayer to be recited on concluding the Qur’an (folios 228b–b), with the colophon on folio 228b which states that the Qur’an was completed in Isfahan by the order of Mirza Habibullah Khan, Mushir al-Mulk. The date is given in the complicated form as: ‘In the 9th month [Ramadan] of the 44th of the 15[?], the first of the 190[?], the fourth of the second thousand [23] of the hijrah [1321?[?]] [June–July 1866].’ Little is recorded of the patron, Mirza Habibullah Khan (Ansari), Mushir al-Mulk, other than the fact that he was a minister of Zill al-Sultan in Isfahan. He was dismissed and imprisoned in Sha’ban 1308 (March–April 1891), his wealth was confiscated and ultimately he was put to death. Although Zill al-Sultan attributed his death to influenza, it is generally believed that he was poisoned. I’timad al-Saltanah, reporting his death in Jamadi al-‘Akhbar 1359 (January 1892), indicates that Zill al-Sultan engineered it in order to seize his assets. Nasir al-Din Shah certainly summoned Zill al-Sultan to Tehran and questioned him closely on what had occurred. I’timad al-Saltanah lists Mushir al-Mulk among the musta‘alīn (‘pay masters’) working in Amin al-Sultan’s Ministry of Internal Affairs, as the factorum (pishkār) for Isfahan. Arakani mentions him with the title Banu al-Mulk, before he was given the title Mushir al-Mulk. This exquisite Qur’an certainly bears testimony to his wealth. Its quality is the work of a master illuminator, who also executed cat. 20 and 31.

Folio 12a bears a birth note for a certain Mirza Ahmad Khan on 18 Rabi’ al-Thani 1306 (23 September 1888). He was possibly a son of Habibullah Khan, Mushir al-Mulk. The covers are of black shagreen with traces of two bands of tooled decoration. They are possibly of oxidized silver, as are the rules on the plain red leather doublure.
The Nasir al-Din Shah period

30 folios 2b-3a

31 folios 1b-2a
This manuscript opens with the main text of the Qur'an set in a double-page illuminated spread (folios 1b–2a) with a crenellated border in gold and polychrome, with conspicuous cherry-red accents quite similar in arrangement and colour range to cat.30, but of slightly inferior quality. The text on these opening folios is written in clouds reserved against gold.

The entire Qur'an is written in small naskh. Text divisions are indicated in the margins in gold riqa’s in almond-shaped devices on a lapis-blue ground with illuminated finials, while bism are in lozenge and are on a red ground. Surah titles are also written in gold riqa’s on either a red or a lapis-blue ground, set in illuminated panels in polychrome and gold. Catchwords are written in naskh. Small gold cartouches outlined in lapis-blue are placed at the top right- and left-hand corner of each opening, indicating the title of the chapter (on the ‘a’ folio) and either the full or the abbreviated forms for istitkebab (on the ‘b’ folios) in red riqa’s.

The main text is followed by a short prayer on folio 20b, followed by the colophon on folio 20a, both in riqa’s. The colophon records that this Qur'an was copied for ‘Mirza Zayn al-'Abidin Imdad Jun'ab, of the capital Tehran’. Mirza Zayn al-'Abidin Zahir al-Islam (AH 1261–1321/AD 1845–1904) was a son of Sayyid Abeer-Askim, himself the Imam Jun'ab of Tehran. Since he was too young to succeed to the post at his father’s death, his uncle took over the duties until he came of age. He was confirmed in the office by Nasir al-Din Shah in AH 1280 (AD 1865–9). Zayn al-'Abidin’s first wife was the daughter of Duzr-i Khan Mu'alliy al-Mamluk, and his second wife, Ziya’ al-Saltanah, was the daughter of Nasir al-Din Shah. He is recorded by Mufa'yyiri as excelling all the clergy of his time, as an intelligent warrior (mubarriz), a builder and cultivator. At his death he was buried in the magnificent tomb in south Tehran that he had built for his father, which is known as Sar-i Qibri-1 Aqa.1

The scribe, Mirza 'Abd al-Husayn Khush-Navis (not to be confused with the shibkatb scribe of Q8 55,2 pen-named Qudsi (AH 1287–1366/AD 1871–1947) was the eldest son of Muhammad ‘Ali Isfahani and a pupil of Sayyid Muhammad Baqir and Mulla Muhammad Kashani in all the sciences, but he learnt the art of calligraphy from his father, who advised him to follow the styles of Ahmad Nasyir and Zayn al-'Abidin ashraf al-kutub (the scribe of cat.5). Indeed, he copied a Qur'an of Zayn al-'Abidin’s so closely that, but for the colophon, it is virtually impossible to distinguish one from the other. He is considered by Manuchhir Qudsii as the last of the naskh scribes, and the best in Isfahan.

When he was young he is reported to have copied surah al-Ikhlas (c161) on a grain of rice. He founded the Qudsiyyah Madrasah in Isfahan in AH 1326 (AD 1908–9), and became active in teaching, only occasionally working as a scribe. Three manuscripts by him are in the possession of his descendants, but no date is given. One is a Qur’an known as the Samsam al-Mulli Qur’an, which was lithographed; he contrived to arrange the lines so that the first and last start with the same letter, the second and the penultimate lines likewise, only the middle line being without a pair. The inscriptions on the tombs of two of his contemporaries, Mirza Abbas Pa Qulqi’s, the leader of the N ‘or’ullahlai dervishes, and Hamayi Shirazi, the poet, and those around the inner drum of the Zaynabiyah Mosque in Isfahan are also by him.3 This Qur’an is his earliest recorded work, and was copied when he was 18 years of age.

The lacquered covers are decorated with flowers on a brown ground, bordered with a band of flowers and leaves in gold on a black ground. The doublures are plain red, with gold rules.
The Nasir al-Din Shah period

A single-page illuminated manuscript, with the four range to cat. 30, written in clouds.

The colophon was copied for Mirza ibn Zahir al-Islam of the Imam Jum'a death, his uncle took Nazir al-Din Shah of Durr al-Khan to the daughter of Nazir if his time, as an he was buried in the which is known as Sar-i Shikastah, with the who is the eldest son of Mulla Muhammad father, who Din asbif al-kastab is closely that, but one the other. He is con-

1 (11) on a grain of rice.

scripts by him are an known as the range the lines soultimate lines like the tombs of two of Sullahi dervishes, the Zaynabiyyah served work, and was bordered with are plain red, with
This Qur'an is one of the most lavishly illuminated manuscripts of the late Qajar period. Its quality, the inclusion of marginal commentaries in both Arabic and Persian, and the absence of any divination instructions show that it was produced under the direction of a learned cleric. Folios 291b–294a contain the genealogy of the Tabataba'i family, traced back to the first Shi'i Imam, 'Ali. This genealogy, together with the date of the manuscript, the notes at the beginning and at the end, all point to Sayyid Muhammad Tabataba'i as the first owner, if not the patron, of this Qur'an. The names of his son, Sayyid Abu'l-Qasim, his grandson Mir Sayyid 'Ali and his great-grandson Sayyid Vahid were later added to this genealogy.1

The notes on folio 298 were written clearly by Mir Sayyid 'Ali, where he recorded the birth and death dates of his father, Sayyid Abu'l-Qasim (AH 1327/1515–AD 1870–1946); the birth dates of a woman, possibly his wife, Tal'at al-Zaman (AH 1334/AD 1916), and his own (AH 1352/AD 1932) and of a daughter, Layla (AH 1356/AD 1938); a son, Vahid (Shamsi 1331/AD 1912); and three others: Farah Angiz (AH 1344/AD 1926), Tayyibah (AH 1346/ AD 1929) and Mahmud (AH 1356/AD 1938).

According to the notes by later owners on folio 12, the Qur'an was presented by Sayyid Muhammad to his wife in Rabi' al-Awal 1331 (9 March 1913). This note is accompanied by an impression of the writer's seal, 'Muhammad ibn Sadiq al-Husayni al-Tabataba'i, 1326 [AD 1908–9]. Another note, written by Sayyid Abu'l-Qasim and dated 1 Shawwal 1326 (9 February 1913), records that he inherited the Qur'an on his mother's death. The last note, on the verso, was written by Mir Sayyid 'Ali, who records that he received the manuscript from his father, and likewise requests that it stays in the family. It bears the date 29 Urbishih 1341 shamsi, corresponding to 14 Dhul-Hijjah 1381 (8 April 1962).

The double page marking the beginning of the second juz' (folios 11b–12a) bears two illuminated marginal rondels. That on folio 11b reads al-juz' al-thani ('The second juz'), and that on folio 12a al-Sultan Muzaffar al-Din Shah. The absence of a patron's name in the colophon and the presence of the Shah's name in the rounded rise the question of this Qur'an's designation, for such illuminated cartouches are almost entirely confined to royal commissions or to manuscripts offered as gifts to the monarch. Among other recorded manuscripts with similar cartouches are two copies of the Gulistan of Sa'di in the Gulistan Palace Library, one of which was copied in AH 3126 (AD 1860–61) by a scribe at the court (khābāh-zād) and the other in AH 324 (AD 1906–7); both were offered as gifts to Muzaffar al-Din Shah.2 Those with the name of Nasir al-Din Shah include the Qur'an for which he provided the scribe with writing instruments, copied by 'Ali Riza Partu in AH 1377 (AD 1860–61), in which the Shah's name appears at the beginning of each juz' as well as on the final two pages; another Qur'an dated AH 1268 (AD 1882–3) was a gift to Nasir al-Din Shah and the name appears on the upper margin of the last folio.3 There are many manuscripts with the name of Fath 'Ali Shah that were mainly commissioned by him; the exceptions are two by Ahmad Nayarzad, which must have been restored on his orders.4

Illuminated cartouches bearing a name other than the monarch's are few in the Qajar period. They include cat.68 and a Qur'an sold at Sotheby's,5 where the name of the patron, Muhammad sulfān al-'alami', was treated in the same way as in this Qur'an. Both cat.68 and the Sotheby's Qur'an were copied in Isfahan, one by Muhammad Rahim (dated AH 1282/ AD 1865–6) and the other by his father Ghulam'ali Isfahani (dated AH 1265/AD 1846–7). A Qur'an with the completion date of AH 1358 (AD 1892–93) bears the name Zill al-Sultan close to the beginning of each juz' and was also copied in Isfahan: the colophon states
that it had been ordered by Fath'Ali Shah, but had been left unfinished, so Zill-al-Sultan ordered the best scribes and illuminators in the land to complete it, which took eight years. The name of the original scribe is not given, but the marginal texts are in nasta’liq and by ‘Ali Akbar Gulistanah. 4 These few Qu’rans, all of high quality and all copied in Isfahan, show that the city remained a centre for manuscript production of royal quality throughout the 19th century.

In the case of cat. 12 the absence of a patron’s name from the colophon suggests that it was commissioned by a member of the Tabataba’i family as a gift to Murzaflar al-Din Shah. When, for whatever reason, it was not presented to him it became a prized possession of the family.

To judge from its date, the patron was Mirza Sayyid Muhammad Tabataba’i, known as Sangalai, a son of Sayyid Sadiq Tabataba’i, 5 who was the Imam Jum’a of Tehran in AH 1298 (AD 1880–81). He was known as a man of honour respected by both the mullah (national assembly) and the people, and a protector of the constitution. 6 He urged Nazim al-Islam (the author of the Tārkīb-i bidarat-yi Irānīyāt, ‘The History of the Awakening of the Iranians’) to found secret societies to alert people to the dangerous state of affairs and rouse them to action. 7 He and his father Sayyid Sadiq are also stated to have been involved with the Freemasons. 8 He played a prominent role in the events of 1905, which marked the beginning of the revolution, and in the overthrow of the Prime Minister ‘Ayn al-Dawlah, and, as a prominent reforming mujahid, proposed that the ‘udāna (should take jizy (sanctuary) in the shrine of Shahzādah ‘Abd al-Azim in south Tehran as a protest against the appointment of Mirza ‘Ali Asghar Khan, Amin al-Sultan (the patron of cat. 29) without the consent of the mullah. 9

The manuscript opens with an illuminated double-page spread (folios 1b–2a) of rectangular panels containing lobed central medallions and pendants with a prayer to be recited on commencing the Qur’an written in gold riqa’ on a lapis-blue ground, decorated with gold scrolls and leaves. The surround is decorated with scrolling blossoms and feathery leaves in gold outlined in black and highlighted with touches of colour on an uncoloured ground. Corner-pieces and occasional palmettes and half-palmettes are emphasized by the use of a ground in gold or polychrome. The margins, with foliate scrolls and repeating palmettes, are similarly decorated.

The main text starts on a double-page spread of rich illumination, mainly in gold and lapis-blue (folios 2b–13a). There are similar illuminations in a Qur’an by Muhammad ‘Ali Isfahani sultān al-kuttah, for the Governor of Isfahan, dated AH 1289 (AD 1872–73) in the Gulistan Palace Library. 10 The margins of folios 3b–4b and 8b–17a, as well as the double-page spreads marking the beginning of each juz’, are decorated with scrolling lotus buds and leaves in various tones of gold, outlined in black and highlighted with polychrome. The entire text is written in clear fine naskh in clouds decorated with slender gold leaves and scrolls, reserved against a plain gold ground. Four-boled gold rosettes outlined in black, with radii and dots, mark verses up to folio 9, after which a new marker, in the form of a floret, is used together with four-lobed rosettes. This is contrary to the common practice of putting the more ornate markings at the beginning. Catchwords are written in riqa’. Text divisions are marked by devices with finials set in lobed vertical cartouches, with fine lapis-blue leaves on an uncoloured ground. Each juz’ is marked by a lapis-blue roundel, nisf by a lapis-blue half-palmette and by a red cartouche, all decorated with gold scrolls, and edged with a band of polychrome florets on a gold ground.

Commentaries are in Persian up to folio 6b and then partly in Arabic and partly in Persian, with no apparent reason for the change of language, all in small naskh with
delicate interlinear gold scrolls in vertical cartouches, outlined with red, black and gold rules and often edged with flame-like motifs. These marginal texts include commentaries and lists of the virtues of reciting each surah. Qur'anic quotations and the headings for the commentaries are in red and blue, or occasionally in gold riqa' outlined in black (folio 16a). Illuminated palmettes with finials at the top right- or left-hand corners of the page indicate the title of the surah (on the 'a' folios) and the juz' (on the 'b' folios), all written in gold riqa' outlined in black on a gold ground. Surah titles are in gold riqa' on red or lapis-blue cartouches, decorated with gold scrolls and leaves, set in finely illuminated panels.

The main text is followed by two prayers (folio 293a) to be read on concluding the Qur'an. The final commentary on the same page ends with: 'Almighty God aided me to complete this commentary in the month of Rab' al-Awwal, of the year one thousand three hundred and seventeen, 1317 [July–August 1899]. The following spread (folios 293b–294a) bears similar marginal illuminations to those on folios 3b and 4b. However, the central panels, bordered with a band of illumination mainly in gold and lapis-blue, are filled with alternate gold and silver rectangles. The genealogy of the Tabataba'i Sayyids going back to 'Ali is written in the gold rectangles in black naskh. The panels at the top bear surah al-Hadid (11), verse 23, written in gold riqa' on a lapis-blue ground, decorated with arabesque scrolls. The lower panels of these two pages bear the colophon written in riqa' on clouds reserved against gold and decorated with florets and leaves in polychrome with the scribe's name, Sayyid Muhammad, known as Sharaf al-Ma'ali, pen-named Baqa, and the date Muhammadd 1317 [May–June 1899].

Ittimad al-Saltanah describes Sayyid Muhammad as an Isfahani scribe known by his pen-name Baqa and his title Ashraf al-Kuttub, who was a superb master of naskh. 'All those possessing treasures of calligraphy and excellent manuscripts boast of possessing a copy of the Qur'an by him'. At the time Ittimad al-Saltanah was writing al-Ma'âthir (circa AH 1310/AD 1894–7), the scribe was living in the capital Tehran.15 His recorded works are dated between AH 1285 (AD 1867) and AH 1341 (AD 1922) and tell us not only that he was from Isfahan, but also that he was a pupil of Zayn al-'Abidin Isfahani, Ashraf al-Kuttub (the scribe of cat. 3). He must have inherited his own title of Ashraf al-Kuttub on the death of Zayn al-'Abidin in AH 1306 (AD 1888), although the earliest recorded colophon in which he uses it is dated AH 1320 (AD 1901–2). He also signs himself as Salzāni on album pages dated AH 1325 (AD 1889–8) and AH 1331 (AD 1895–6). These titles indicate that he worked as a royal scribe, though, surprisingly, the titles Ashraf al-Kuttub and Saltanah occur only in three of his many colophons. He copied 'Ala' al-Din Tabrizi and Ahmad Nayarzi, and wrote poems in both Arabic and Persian.16 Apart from manuscripts and calligraphic pages, he wrote inscriptions on lacquer bindings.17 None of his colophons gives his whereabouts at the time of copying, so it is difficult to say when he moved from Isfahan to Tehran.

The fine lacquered covers are decorated with floral and summer flowers on a gold-sprinkled brown ground. The margins bear cartouches filled with flower arrangements in polychrome and gold, alternating with quatrefoil cartouches with flower-heads. The narrow borders of the central panel and the margins are decorated with scrolling flowers and leaves in gold on a red ground. The central panels of the doublures depict the Prophet Muhammad in prayer (on the front doublure) with angels hovering around him, and Imam 'Ali (on the back doublure) seated and holding a sheathed sword. Both are shown in oval frames, on a field of gold flowers and leaves on a dark-green ground. On the front doublure the verse jalla allah a'azza wa jalla lahu laka lamana khalatu' al-aslāk (which, contrary to its claim, is not Qur'anic) is broken into four parts and placed in quatrefoil cartouches at the corners of the central oval panel in gold riqa'. On the back doublure the
The Muzaffar al-Din Shah period

phrase lā fattā illā 'allī lā sayf illā dhūn't-faqār is written in the same manner. The complete phrase is repeated below in black naskh in plain gold cartouches. In each case the wide marginal bands bear a hadith of the Prophet and a tradition according to Imam Husayn, both on the virtues of reading the Qur'an, in gold riqa' on a red ground decorated with arabesque scrolls in gold. A narrow band separates the central panel from the margin, and is decorated with gold leaves and flowers on a black ground. Since Sayyid Muhammad Baqa wrote the inscriptions on another lacquer binding, it may well be that the long inscription on this binding is also his work. However, the gold illuminations recall the work of Ahmad muzahhib-‘alāh who decorated a pen-box in the Khalili Collection dated AH 1320 (AD 1902–3).18 The spine is of brown leather and, unusually, is decorated with three cartouches outlined with what appears to be a chain motif, with flowers and leaves at their centres, all in gold.
The Muzaffar al-Din Shah period
33
Single-volume Qur'an
Iran, second half of the 19th century

31 folios, 33.5 x 21.3 cm, with 41 lines to the page
Material: smooth, cream/grey, burnished paper, laid, with approximately 11 laid lines to the centimetre and no apparent rib shadows or chain lines
Text area 23.5 x 14.3 cm
Script: Main text in naskh; surah titles and marginal text divisions in riqa
Illumination: Text frame of narrow gold and red bands, green, light blue, black and lapis-blue rules; outer frame of red, gold and black rules; interlinear gold patches; verses marked by plain gold discs; surah headings in plain gold panels; marginal devices marking text divisions
Documentation: Two notes
Binding: Black leather, with inset lacquered pieces, perhaps of the 18th century
Acc. no. Q08.40


The entire text of this Qur'an is written in minute naskh, with interlinear gold patches, with each juz' fitted into two pages. Apart from the first words of each juz' ('b' folios) and half-juz' ('ale' folios), every line starts with an alif marked in red. To achieve this the scribe has had to squash words, expand into the margin (folios 17b, 25a) or elongate particular letters (folios 24b, 27b). An undated Qur'an in the Gulistan Palace Library exhibits a similar feature, and, judging by the number of folios and lines to the page, it also was copied with two pages to the juz'. In the short colophon, the anonymous scribe states that the Qur'an was copied in Mecca according to the tradition of 'Ali. The layout, where each line begins with an alif, is also a feature of a Qur'an in the Salar Jung Library, dated AH 1078 (AD 1667), which was copied in Mecca too, though there each juz' occupies four pages.

No reading instructions are given in cat. 33, and small gold discs or gold dots mark each verse. Surah titles are in red riqa' on plain gold panels. The manuscript opens with the main text (folio 1b) without the usual head-piece. The letters alif, mim and 'ayn placed at the top of this page are difficult to interpret. Text divisions are marked in the margins in illuminated devices in gold, lapis-blue, purple and touches of green and white, with elaborate gold leaves as finials. These devices resemble the illuminations of cat. 26. Catchwords are in naskh and are placed closer to the centre of the page, rather than, more usually, at the bottom left-hand corner.

A note on folio 1b is written by a certain 'Abbas Tasikabani, who presented the Qur'an to his daughter, 'Aziz al-Muluk, on 26 Muharram 1145 (6 August 1926). His oval seal impression reads: 'Abbas, AH 1332 [AD 1914–15]. Another note on the flyleaf (unnumbered) by a certain Dr Yusuf states that the most precious gift he received in Farvardin 1160 (March–April 1981) was this Qur'an, which he took as a fortunate omen.

The covers, which appear to have been re-used and which, in any case, are bound upside down, are of black leather. The central panels bear tooled medallions, pendants and corner-pieces, which are lacquered. The medallions depict a flower-and-bird composition, and the others blossoms. The tooled areas and borders are all gold-rules with tasseled-like motifs. The doublures are red morocco, perhaps with oxidized silver ruling and a chain motif.
linear gold patches, each nue' ('b' folio)

To achieve this the paiya, or elongate
Palace Library
lines to the page, it
the anonymous scribe
of 'Ali. The layout,
the Salar Jung Library,
where each nue' occupies
a gold dot marks
the manuscript opens with
planes, mim and 'ayn placed
marked in the margins
written in black and white, with
sections of cat. 16. Catch-
ther than, more
presented the Qur'an
265. His oval seal
marginal leafleaf (unnumbered)
in Farvardin 1360
also contains
and, where bound
roundels, pendants
ower-and-bird com-
all gold-ruled with
enced silver ruling
Qur'ans from Istanbul
1800–1850

by Tim Stanley

In part one of this catalogue, it was possible to show that a relatively standardized type of Qur'an manuscript began to be produced in the Ottoman empire in the 17th century, and that production of it continued throughout the 18th century. It seems likely that most of the 25 copies from the 17th and 18th centuries in the Khalili Collection (part one, cat. 77–94, and cat. 134 below) were made in Istanbul, although four were attributed with some certainty to two provincial centres, Cairo (part one, cat. 21, 32) and Edirne (part one, cat. 33, 34). It was not possible, however, to trace any distinctive regional variations within this output. In terms of the illumination of their opening pages, for example, most of these manuscripts were decorated in what may be called the blue-and-gold style. In work of this kind, the most important element in the layout, the wide border that encloses the text, is divided by gold half-palmette motifs into areas of gold and blue ground, and these are overlaid with scrolling tendrils set with diminutive floral motifs. The main exception is provided by three manuscripts (part one, cat. 20, 29, 38) in which the opening pages are decorated in a different, gold-on-gold style (the equivalent Ottoman term is zer ender zer). In this type of illumination, two tones of gold are used for the grounds, and the floral scrolls are also in gold, the contrast between the two tones being emphasized by the use of red highlights in areas of yellow gold and green highlights in areas of greenish gold, and sometimes by pricking the yellow gold with a needle to increase its glitter. It has not been possible to attribute these three manuscripts to a single centre, however, and the gold-on-gold style might even be seen as a variant of the blue-and-gold style employed when the illuminator had no access to the blue pigment called ultramarine, made from imported lapis lazuli.

By contrast, regional trends can be readily identified in 19th-century Qur'an manuscripts from the Ottoman empire. In some cases, these trends can be associated with the abandonment of 17th- and 18th-century models, as in the introduction of the Ottoman Baroque style into Qur'an illumination in the reign of Sultan Selim III (1789–1807). This metropolitan innovation was eventually taken up in provincial centres such as Bursa and Shumen (see pp. 258–63 below), and in Shumen, where Qur'an production boomed in the mid-19th century, Baroque elements played a role in the formation of a distinctive local style of Qur'an illumination (see pp. 257–68 below). Yet most 19th-century Ottoman Qur'an manuscripts in the Khalili Collection (15 out of 26) continue the blue-and-gold and gold-on-gold styles found in the 17th- and 18th-century examples, and it is possible to detect broad regional trends even among these manuscripts. More precisely, Qur'an production in 19th-century Istanbul can be shown to have had a character of its own, distinct from that current in the provinces. Its most striking feature is the dominance of the gold-on-gold style in the illumination of the opening pages of text. Indeed, it seems that the blue-and-gold style was entirely banished to the provinces, at least during the early part of the century.

The evidence for this conclusion comes partly from the manuscripts themselves, both in terms of their physical characteristics and the information found in their colophons. This has been supplemented by information from two texts that provide a narrative of the history of calligraphy in the Ottoman capital during the 19th century through a sequence of biographical notices on its major figures. The earlier of these two texts, published in AH 1355 (AD 1838–39), forms part of the Khatz va Khattatân ('Calligraphy and Calligraphers') of Mirza Habib (1835–94), an 'ahma born writer living resident in Istanbul. The other comprises the main substance of the Sdn Hattatlar ('The Last Calligraphers') of Mahmud Kemal Inal (1870–1957), published in 1955. The two authors were conscious of their place in a tradition of writing on calligraphy founded in the 16th century and perfected in the 18th by Mstakim-zade Suleyman Sa'deddin Efendi, whose Tuhfah-ı Khattatîn ('The Pick of Calligraphers') is, as we saw in part one (pp. 60–73), and important aid to the understanding of Ottoman calligraphy in the 17th and 18th centuries. Indeed, in their work, Habib and Mahmud Kemal addressed the death of biographical information on Istanbul's calligraphers follow ing the death of Mstakim-zade in AH 1320 (AD 1778–79), and I have argued elsewhere that their two publications deal not so much with the 19th century as with an age 'after Mstakim-zade'.
Habib Efendi

Works on calligraphy certainly continued to be written after Müstakim-zade's demise, but they lack his sophistication, and no attempt to update his biographical dictionary appeared until the Khatt vs Khattâtan was printed in AH 1301. According to his successor Mahmud Kemal Inal, its author, Mirza Habib, moved from Iran to Istanbul 30 years before his death in 1894 and was employed in government service for 25 years. Since his learning was beyond dispute even by European standards, he was admitted as an honorary member and correspondent of the Academy of Literature in France. For 21 years he taught Persian and Arabic at the Galatasaray Lycée and Persian and French at the Darülacefika and was a member of the Inspection and Scrutiny Committee of the Ministry of Education. Habib was the author of numerous published works, but the most important was the Khatt vs Khattâtan. Of this work, Mahmud Kemal later remarked that it "was clearly written with more emphasis on Iranian calligraphers than on the Turks. ... Nevertheless, it is still worthy of respect, since it is contrary to justice not to see it as deserving our esteem when an Iranian has - more or less - performed a duty that should have been performed by a Turk. Indeed, if our calligraphers had given up being jealous of one another and ceased imagining that there were no greater calligraphers than themselves, and if they had spent as freely of their efforts as they could have done, the year 1373, the date of the Tufah-i Khattattin, would not have remained unattended and neglected. In Habib's short preface to the Khatt vs Khattâtan, he declared that he would supply an account of each calligrapher's 'character, his manner, where and when he lived, the date of his death and his place of burial, and the calligraphic works he left as a memorial.' In the main section of the book, these entries are divided by styles of calligraphy (thuluth and naskh, nasta'liq, etc.), which are in turn subdivided by region (Iran, the Ottoman empire). In the section on Ottoman thuluth and naskh calligraphers, however, the main sequence of entries ends in AH 1202 (AD 1787-8), the completion date of the Tufah-i Khattattin, which was Habib's avowed main source. There then follows a sub-section entitled 'Celebrated thuluth and naskh calligraphers who emerged after 1203,' and this is followed by sub-sections devoted to 'Those among more recent calligraphers whose date of death is unknown,' and 'Calligraphers who are alive at the present time.' Altogether, these three sub-sections contain entries on 35 masters who flourished in the 19th century. In the preface, Habib explains that, 'As for the biographies of those who lived after 1203, since these have not yet been chronicled, enquiries have been made here and there and wherever possible, and their circumstances and positions and the dates of their deaths have been established by examining their graves and tombstones, and these have been added in the manner of an appendix.' In other words, Habib could no longer rely on Müstakim-zade, and he had to go out into the field. That he, or one of his sources, did so literally is demonstrated by his references to the location of the graves of many of his subjects, whose tombstones either consisted of some or all of the information he relays about them. A trip across the Bosphorus from Istanbul to the Karaca Ahmed Cemetery in Uskudar, where Şeyh Hanûlallah was buried, may have supplied Habib with information on at least six other calligraphers buried there: Abdulkadir Hamdi, Tosyevi Hafiz Mehmed, Burusvî (or Bilecikli) Mustafa, and three mentioned below, Deli Osman Efendi, Laz Ömer Efendi, and Kebeci-zade Mehmed Vasfi. The result, however, is that Habib's 'Ottoman' calligraphers are almost entirely Istanbul ones. Scribe activity in such important provincial centres as Edirne and Shumen was ignored.

Mahmud Kemal

Habib's methods were, though, insufficiently rigorous for his leading successor, Mahmud Kemal Inal, the author of the Son Hattattier. Abdulkadir Hamdi, Deli Osman Efendi, Laz Ömer Efendi, and Kebeci-zade Mehmed Vasfi were all calligraphers of lasting repute, whom the later writer was happy to include in his own work, but in the case of Tosyevi Hafiz Mehmed and Burusvî (or Bilecikli) Mustafa, Mahmud Kemal evidently considered that there was not enough evidence to
He's demise, but they reared until the Khatiyyat of His Inval, its author, and was employed in European standards, he natural in France. For 21 such as the Darüşşafaka Educational." This was the Khatiyyat of I. Only written with more still worthy of respect, in an has — more or less — calligraphers had given longer calligraphers than none, the year [1373, the the衮被 selected.5 It could supply an account of his death and his section of the book, etc.), which are in turn (thuluth and naskh 8), the completion date follows a sub-section and this is followed by the date of death is unknown, these sub-sections contain information, as after 1312, since these are the only possible, and their dated by examining their (a) In other words, he field. That he, or one of the graves of many of the location he relays about very in Uskudar, where the least six other calligraphers (Bilecikli) Mustafa and Iskender Mehmet Vahsi.12 In Istanbul ones, Scrbal 10.

Under the president, Mahmud Kemal Inval, Lâz Ömer Efendi was on the later writer was identified and Burucuoğlu (or there not enough evidence to

substantiate their standing as calligraphers, and their names were dropped. Mahmud Kemal makes his view of Habib's methods clear in his introduction: 'although Mirza Habib's work is worthy of attention and deserves our gratitude, the errors in the calligraphers' "circumstances and positions and the dates of their deaths" found in his book are striking, and the notices are not "detailed and expository" — they are very brief, consisting of two or three lines.14 In some of his entries in the Son Hzattalar, such as that on Abdullah Serif, Mahmud Kemal is scathing about Habib's notices.15 In other cases, though, he incorporates Habib's data with only slight amendments. One example is the information in Habib's notice on Çınar Mustafa Vâsi,16 the teacher of the great Kâzım Mustafa İzet Effendi (see cat.50), which was merely rearranged by Mahmud Kemal.17 Thus, despite his criticisms of Habib, Mahmud Kemal incorporated the sections of the Khatiyyat of Khatibiyan devoted to the period after Mustakim-zade's death into his own work: his contribution was the exclusion of scribes whom he thought unworthy of our attention, the deletion of Habib's material where he considered it erroneous, the addition of a great deal more information from other sources, and the extension of the historical coverage to his own time.

Unlike Habib, who does not comment on his exclusion of Ottoman provincial calligraphers, Mahmud Kemal was clearly aware of the same deficiency in his own work. In general, he is able to offer details of the life of a scribe of provincial origins only if he settled in the capital. An example is Mehmed Rasjid Efendi, the son of a Bursa saw-maker called Hacı Ali Ağa, who was born in AH 1165 (AD 1758–59).18 Rasjid attended a madrasah and received training as a scribe from two local masters, İbrahim Şükri and Selim Efendi. Around 1290 he spent a year in Istanbul as the pupil of the great Mehmed Şefik Bey, who had himself spent three-and-a-half years in Bursa renewing and adding to the calligraphic designs on the walls of the Great Mosque, damaged in the earthquake of 1855. Rasjid subsequently spent a month a year in the capital continuing his training with his master, and in AH 1199 (AD 1787–88) he was appointed a calligrapher in the War Office in Istanbul. He was resident in the city when he died in 1826. It was Rasjid's permanent move to the capital, where he must have come into contact with Mahmud Kemal, that enabled the writer to acquire information on him. With regard to Rasjid's teacher Şefik Efendi, however, Mahmud Kemal laments that: 'Although he was one of the most celebrated calligraphers of his home town, there is insufficient information available on him.' A distant relative was able to identify his forebears, including the 16th-century Bursa poet Lemi Celebi, but, 'Who was his master? In which Bursa cemetery is he buried? On what date did he die? No one was able to provide information on these matters.' This oblivion engulfed even those calligraphers who, like Süleyman Vebbi, the scribe of cat.41, were trained in the capital but then went to live in provincial centres. Mahmud Kemal knew of his name only from a bidye he signed in AH 1147 (AD 1731–2), which is now in the Topkapi Palace Library.20

The Khatibi calligraphers

By collating information provided by Habib and Mahmud Kemal with that found in their colophons, it is possible to identify the scribes of eight or even nine 19th-century Qur'ans in the Khatibi Collection as men who were trained and worked in Istanbul or who were trained there and then moved to provincial centres. It should be noted, however, that only three of these scribes have entries of their own in either or both of these two works. The earliest of these Qur'ans is cat.47, which was copied by Hafiz Seyyid Mehmed Şakir in AH 1224 (AD 1809–10). He is not recorded by Habib or Mahmud Kemal, but he states in the colophon of the manuscript that he was taught calligraphy by Ismail Zihîdî the Second, one of the greatest masters of his time. Ismail Zihîdî died in AH 1221 (AD 1806–7), having served as a writing-master in the Imperial Palace, and his halife, or 'chosen successor', was his pupil Hafiz Ibrahim Şevki (d. after 1823). This man in turn taught Seyyid Hafiz Ahmed Assim and Seyyid Süleyman Vebbi, the scribes of cat.46 and 51 respectively.

Ahmed Assim is otherwise unknown, and the character of cat.46 suggests very strongly that he was working in a provincial city when he copied the manuscript. On the other hand, as we have

Quar'an from Istanbul
seen, Süleyman Vehbi was recorded by Mahmud Kemal, but only as the scribe of a single hilye in the Topkapı Palace Library. This was because he had gone to live in Bursa, where he probably trained İbrahim Şüküri, one of the early masters of the Mehmed Râşid discussed above. Süleyman Vehbi’s most celebrated pupil, however, was Hafiz Seyyid Halil Şükri Nâşîbendî (d. after 1856), who later settled in Istanbul. In the capital Halil Şükri earned a reputation as a calligrapher of note, and this led to information on him appearing in the works of Habib and Mahmud Kemal.

Another calligrapher who had a pupil more famous than himself was Filibeli Mehmed Efendi, the scribe of cat. 39. Both his pupil Mehmed Şakir Recâi (1804–74) and his own master, Deli Osman Efendi (d. 1853), have entries in both the Khatûsu Khaṭṭâtâwâ and the Son Hatatâtâw. A less distinguished lineage deriving from Deli Osman Efendi was that of Mustafa Rûşâd, the scribe responsible for cat. 42. His master was Safi-zade or Kâtib-zade Ahmed Zihni of Katâbâya, who is mentioned briefly by Mahmud Kemal as a pupil of Osman Efendi’s pupil Kâltaqû-zade Hasan Fevzi. It is not clear, however, where Kâltaqû-zade and Safi-zade worked, and the inferior quality of the illumination and binding of cat. 39 suggests that it was not produced in the capital.

Seyyid Hüseyn Efendi, the scribe of cat. 35, was also the pupil of a famous Istanbul calligrapher known both to Habib and Mahmud Kemal. This was Mahmud Celaeddin, who was responsible for cat. 34. A more conservative figure was Laz Ömer Efendi, who taught Baltaci Hafiz Mehmed Şakir, the scribe of cat. 44, and Seyyid Abdurrahman Tevfik, who copied cat. 55. Abdurrahman Tevfik states explicitly that his training with Laz Ömer Efendi took place in Istanbul, but he had previously been taught by Evliya-zade Ahmed Nazif in Shumen, and it seems he returned there before cat. 55 was produced in AH 1236 (AD 1819–20). Mehmed Şakir, however, went to live in one of the holy cities of the Hijaz, probably before AH 1251 (AD 1835–6), when he produced cat. 44. Despite this, both Habib and Mahmud Kemal recorded him. The same accolade was received by Kazasker Mustafa Izzet Efendi, the scribe responsible for cat. 50, who was probably the most important Istanbul calligrapher of the 19th century. As noted above, he was the pupil of Cümmâz Mustafa Vaif Efendi (d. AH 1269/AD 1852), who was in turn the pupil of Kebeci-zade Mehmed Vaif, who died in AH 1240 (AD 1824–5) and whose lineage went back through a succession of famous masters – Ebubekir Râşid, Hüseyn Habib and Derviş Ahir the Second – to Hafiz Osman.

Of the nine scribes mentioned above, three – Baltaci Hafiz Mehmed Şakir, Seyyid Süleyman Vehbi and Seyyid Abdurrahman Tevfik – are known to have left Istanbul to settle in provincial centres, and their Qur’ans are decorated in a variety of styles. Two more – Mustafa Rûşâd and Ahmed Asim – produced manuscripts decorated in decidedly provincial styles and Mustafa Rûşâd in particular had a much weaker link with the capital. Of the remaining four, three – Mehmed Şakir, the pupil of Ismail Zühdî, Filibeli Mehmed Efendi and Seyyid Hüseyn, the pupil of Mahmud Celaeddin – produced manuscripts that are decorated in the gold-on-gold style. There are four other 19th-century Qur’ans in the Khalili Collection that are decorated in this style (cat. 36, 38, 40, 41), and these are the work of scribes whom we know were resident in Istanbul. Three of these scribes – the Haci Abdullah of cat. 36, the Şeyh Mehmed Şakir of cat. 38 and the Mir Ibrahim Ahî of cat. 40 – can be identified as such from the posts they describe themselves as holding in their colophons, while the fourth, Mehmed Emin İzzetî, is known to have produced other Qur’ans in Istanbul. Given that four of the gold-on-gold Qur’ans were produced by scribes resident in Istanbul, and three more were produced by scribes who trained there and are not known to have moved elsewhere, it seems logical to conclude that the gold-on-gold style was typical of a certain level of Qur’an production in the capital.

Court, metropolis and province
The one exception is cat. 55, which was copied in the Imperial Palace itself. This has an unusual type of illumination in which traditional layouts have been maintained, but a new colour scheme has been employed and Baroque motifs have been incorporated into the design. As we shall see
(pp.208-13 below), the clue to this change may be that the manuscript was produced in the sultan's palace rather than in an urban milieu outside it. The semi-Baroque style of cat.50 can therefore be seen as courtly, while the gold-on-gold style is more broadly metropolitan. This distinction, and that between the metropolitan gold-on-gold style and the provincial blue-and-gold, appears to have emerged around 1780, that is, in the age 'after Müstakim-zade'.

It seems that the Ottoman Baroque style came into use for Qur'an illumination in the reign of Sultan Selim III, and it can be tied directly to the court in terms of its early occurrences. At the same time, the material in the Khalili Collection suggests that the blue-and-gold style was still being used in Istanbul as late as 1798–9 (part one, cat.41). It may be, therefore, that during Selim's reign the gold-on-gold style emerged as the more conservative option in Istanbul. It is possible that it was seen as a compromise between the old, represented by the hackneyed blue-and-gold style originally based on Aqquyunlu illumination of the 15th century, and the unacceptably new, represented by the Baroque.

Is it going too far to say that the changes in Qur'an illumination reflect a political struggle between the court and the vested interests that opposed it, which had a strong position among the population of the capital, as the popular revolts of the 14th and early 15th centuries showed? The reign of Sultan Selim III was marked by an unsuccessful attempt to begin a fundamental reform of the Ottoman empire. This move for reform, eventually undertaken with relative success by Selim's cousin Sultan Mahmud II (reg. 1808–1839), led to the marginalization of the scribal bureaucracy, which had been a leading force since the second half of the 17th century. It must be relevant to the history of Qur'an production that Müstakim-zade certainly, and probably also the scribes he recorded, aspired to belong to this class.

At this stage of research, however, it is not possible to be categorical in the presentation of these arguments. It is possible, for example, that the dominance of the gold-on-gold style in Istanbul emerged only gradually. After all, while there is no firm evidence that Istanbul was the place of production of the three pre-1800 Qur'ans in the Khalili Collection decorated in this way (part one, cat.20, 29, 38), there is also no evidence that it was not. It is also possible that the blue ceased to be used for technical rather than economic reasons, or a combination of the two. As noted above, the blue grounds of the blue-and-gold style had originally been painted with the expensive ultramarine pigment obtained from crushed lapis lazuli, but the quality of the blue in 18th-century Ottoman Qur'ans was very uncertain, and this may have led to the blue being dropped.

**Bindings**

Other aspects of Qur'an production, such as binding techniques, also changed over this period according to a scheme that seems, to some extent at least, to parallel the developments in illumination and calligraphy outlined above. It is sometimes difficult to link bindings to dated manuscripts because they were so easily removed and replaced, although it cannot be a coincidence that five of the six manuscripts from the period 1621–37 that have been attributed below to Istanbul (cat.36, 9, 41) have the same type of covers, which may be seen as corresponding to gold-on-gold illumination. The designs are relatively traditional, consisting of centre-pieces or centre-and-corner compositions framed by a border, but the motifs, often palmette scrolls, were executed by tooling in gilt rather than by the use of stamps, and there are no recessed areas. Instead, the contrast between the main figures and the field is sometimes maintained by dyeing the morocco different colours: the inner covers of cat.36, for example, have a lighter maroon centre-piece set against a darker brown field.

These bindings mark a deliberate abandonment of the standard Ottoman binding of earlier years. This bore a recessed centre-and-corner composition, and the recessed elements had designs that were worked in relief using a stamp and then painted with gilt. It is possible that the older type was abandoned because the leather stamps then in use were so poorly made or so worn that the designs they created were not clear, as can be seen in the recurve bindings of cat.43–5. A development in the reverse
direction is seen in the binding of cat. 50, which is as exceptional as its illumination and may, like the manuscript, have been made at court. The outer covers have recessed centre- and corner-pieces with motifs in crisp relief that were clearly produced with new stamps.

The doublures of this manuscript are painted in two tones of gold with a design of leaves and flowers that reappears on the outer covers of cat. 40, which are probably not original to the manuscript. Similar designs also appear on the covers of cat. 35, 46 and 51. Indeed, this type of book cover, which was produced in considerable numbers from the mid-19th century, can be seen as the binding equivalent of the Ottoman Baroque style in illumination. In the provinces, however, a relatively crude type of binding with a diaper pattern composed of more or less convincing leaf motifs was more common (see p. 228 below, and cat. 42, 47, 49).

The end

Conclusions such as these that are based on one collection must be treated with caution. The dominance of the gold-on-gold style, for example, was probably never total, and it certainly did not last. Examination of other collections, such as that of Sakıp Sabancı, shows the gold-on-gold style in use in Istanbul in the first half of the 19th century, but it also shows the blue-and-gold style making a comeback later in the century, in works of very high quality. One such is a Qur'an copied by Mehmed Şerki Efendi in AH 1279 (AD 1862–3) and illuminated by Hacı Hüseyin Efendi. This work is so polished, and so unlike contemporary provincial work in gold and blue (compare cat. 46, 49), that it can be counted as the product of a revival of the blue-and-gold style of the 16th century rather than of an organic continuation of 17th- and 18th-century work. Such revivalist work can certainly be seen at the end of the century, as in a copy of the Qur'an written by Hasan Tahsin in Istanbul in 1894 and decorated with blue-and-gold work by Osman Yümmi in 1904.

By this date, however, the number of Qur'an manuscripts copied in Istanbul, and elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire, was much smaller than in the past. This was because printing had become accepted as a means of reproducing the holy text: the first lithographed edition had been produced in 1871, and in 1874 Sultan Abdüllaziz himself had commissioned an edition of the Qur'an from the Ministry of Education press in Istanbul so that he would have copies to give as gifts (see part one, cat. 16). This change led to the virtual disappearance of much traditional scribal activity, since all other types of book were already being printed. The calligraphic activity that survived in Istanbul, such as the design of inscriptions and the composition of official correspondence, was dealt a further blow by the extinction of the Ottoman Empire itself in the wake of the First World War. For not only were the organs of state that employed many calligraphers destroyed, and the capital moved to Ankara, but in 1928 came the introduction of the Latin or Turkish alphabet, which broke the people's link with and esteem for the writing of Arabic in a fine hand outside religious contexts. A living chain of calligraphic practice and calligraphic lore did survive, but it was distanced from the mainstream of politics and social life, being confined to an art school context.
Qur'ans from Istanbul

4. This appears to be a reference to the Société Asiatique; see Stanley 2001, p.96, n.16.
8. The date 3111223 is that of Mârâkîn-zade's death, while 3111202 is the date of the completion of the Tefsâr.
10. A similar appendix, similarly divided, appears at the end of the section on Ottoman nastî'lîg calligraphers. It contains 21 entries on "Calligraphers who emerged in the Ottoman empire after 1700", see Habib 1950, pp.248–50.
11. Habib 1950, pp.4-5.
13. See İnal 1955, p.13. İnal's own entries can be criticized for being repetitive and incoherent, which can be explained by the way that the accumulations of dismissed notes that went to form Mustafa Kemal's major works were edited into a running text only as they went to press; see İnal 1955, column 11906.
17. İnal 1955, p.507.
21. See the comments in cat.40, 41, 48, for example.
22. Derman 1998, nos 28, 43.
Single-volume Qur'an

Probably Istanbul, Wednesday, 13 Dhu’l-Qa’dah 1192 (3 December 1778)

This book represents the type of Qur'an manuscript produced for sophisticated metropolitan clients by Istanbul scribes of the later 17th and 18th century. The fine illumination, the work of an artist called Ibrahim Nazif, is matched by the excellent hand. Indeed, the scribe, who signed himself as Hafiz Mahmud Celebeddin, was recognized as one of the leading calligraphers of his age. The earliest known work by him is an album recorded by M. Uğur Derman, which is dated AH 1188 (AD 1774–5). On this basis, Derman suggests that Mahmud was born around AH 1163 (AD 1750). If so, he would have been around 28 years of age when he copied this Qur'an. According to Habib, he settled in the village of Isavroz on the Bosphorus and died more than 50 years later, in AH 1245 (AD 1829–30).

He was buried at Eyüp, in the grounds of the dervish lodge called Seyh Murad Tekkesi, with which his father had been connected before him.

A tradition regarding this calligrapher's character and his achievement was recorded by Habib. This makes him the son of Mehmed Dağistanî ('Mehmed from Daghestan'), whom Mahmud Kemal identified as Shaykh Muhammad al-Naqshbandi al-Muradi. Habib was not sure of the name of his first calligraphy master: 'By one account, he was a pupil of the late Ak Molla Ömer Efendi;' by another, he took lessons from Abdüllatif Efendi, a pupil of Rastin Efendi. Later Mahmud applied to Yamak-zade Sâhi Efendi to become his pupil, but Yamak-zade, aware that 'he was one of the most argumentative of men, arrogant and conceited, and unable to submit himself to another man's authority,' turned him down. He then turned to Evâbekir Raşid Efendi, who got rid of him by suggesting that 'writing well depends on writing a lot.' Such was Mahmud's strength of character that he decided to become his own master, turning himself into a calligrapher of outstanding ability.

The high regard in which this manuscript was held in the later 19th century is shown by the ownership inscription on folio 277v. This is in the name of Princess Nâzima, a daughter of Sultan Abdüllaziz (1839–1876). Her mother was Hayramdil, making her the full sister of Prince Abdullah, who was caliph in 1912–14. She was born in 1866, and in 1889, she was married to Ali Hâlid Pâsa.

The manuscript opens with a fine double-page illumination in the traditional combination of gold and blue. In the 19th century, this was associated with provincial production (see pp. 188–91 below), but in the 1770s, when this manuscript was produced, the blue-and-gold style was still used in copies of the Qur'an of the best quality made in the capital.

The binding of dark-brown morocco was added in the 19th century, perhaps shortly before the manuscript was presented to Princess Nâzima. It is decorated in two tones of gold. In the centre is a Europeanizing design of large leaves, with chains of flowers between, all worked with a simple tool. The border has a running pattern of a flowering vine between gold bands tooled with a palmette motif. The flap has a similar design, and the spine, the spine of the flap and the ends of the text block also have gilded designs. The double-dots and matching 'dykeaves' are of green morocco, with an overall diaper pattern painted in gold. The border consists of two bands, both stamped with the same leaf motif but painted in different tones of gold.
The fine illumination, painted hand. Indeed, the caption as one of the best of an album recorded in an oasis, Derman sug-
ald have been around 100 years. Settled in the village of Murad Tekkesi,3

3. The caption was recorded by Ahmed Darghestan, whom
al-Muradi. Habib was a pupil of the calligrapher Efe, a pupil of Habib to become his

4. Writing a letter that he decided to establish a school.

5. The 19th century is shown by Sultan Nâzima, a

6. The traditional combination of provincial production and urban, the blues and

7. Coat of arms, perhaps shortly before painted in two tones of flowers

8. A similar design, and five gilded designs. The overall diaper pattern

9. The same leaf motif
Single-volume Qur'an
Probably Istanbul, AH 1254 (AD 1838–9)

The text was written in an accomplished hand by Seyyid Hüseyin Efendi, who names his master in the colophon on folio 103a; his teacher was the great Istanbul calligrapher Mahmud Celeeddin, who was the scribe of cat. 34. Seyyid Hüseyin also seems to have worked in Istanbul, since his Qur'an manuscript is decorated in the gold-on-gold style that can be associated with the Ottoman capital. The author of this rich but severe illumination is named in a brief inscription set in an illuminated band beneath the colophon. Arranged in two cartouches, this text reads: Aşk-i Mevlâna ile / bayret zede / Mevlevi Sâkir-i gâdâ / mazebbin şâde ("Bewildered by love of Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi), the beggar Mevlevi Şakir became an illuminator").

On the first pages of text, the wide borders are filled with a traditional combination of arabesque and floral scrollwork. The arabesque scrolls divide the ground into areas of green and yellow gold, while the floral scrolls run over grounds of both colours: the flowers are yellow gold and have red highlights where the ground is green gold, and green highlights where it is yellow gold. The layout is not entirely traditional in its details. The most striking innovation is the transformation of the edge of the border (previously lobed) into a sequence of triangular elements that have an almost Art Deco appearance. The quality of this opening illumination is continued throughout the manuscript, extending to the surah headings, the text frames and the marginal devices marking divisions of the text (juz', hizâb) and prostrations.

The binding is very similar to that of cat. 51 but adapted to the larger format. The floral element is less dense, however, and there is no border tooled with a laurel-wreath motif. The green morocco doublures and flyleaves have simple floral centre-pieces and borders in two tones of gold.
Efradi, who names most of the calligrapher's initials, also seems to have adopted a gold-on-gold style here, with rich but severe illumination beneath the colophon. Meryem zede / Melekezede al-Din Rumî, the calligrapher, combined gold and red ground into areas of gold, the flowers presented in red and green, and the gold, rich in its details. The most striking aspect of the manuscript is the green (previously lobed) leaf motif, which appears to have been entered into the opening divisions of the text. This is the most impressive feature of the larger format. The floral arrangement is a recurring motif, appearing in the margins and borders...
36
Single-volume Qur'an
Probably Istanbul, 9 Jumadil-Ula 1216 (17 September 1801)

305 folios, 15.8 x 9.7 cm, with 13 lines to the page
Material: A smooth, dark-cream laid paper, burnished to a gloss; with approximately eight 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 10.2 x 5.5 cm
Script: Main text in nastāb, with reading marks in red; surah headings and occasional marginalia in red ragī
Script: The script is probably the same as in the other manuscripts of the Muhammed family.
Illumination: Extensive decoration on folios 1b–24; text frames ruled in gold and black; verses marked by gold discs with no outline; marginal ornaments marking divisions of the text and sūqādāt; edges of the text block gilded
Documentation: A colophon and a note recording a gift
Binding: Contemporary, without flap
Accession no.: QIR 35

1. Cf. the descendants of a 15-volume Qur'an dated AH 1302 (AD 1884–5); see Stanley 1996, no. 36.

This modest manuscript ends with a relatively long colophon, in which the scribe identifies himself as Hacı Abdullah, 'son of the late chief Qur'an reciter, Hacı-zade Mehmed Efendi', and 'teacher at the school of the late Şeyhülislam Mehmed Eş'ad Efendi'. Abdullah also states that the Qur'an was 'the first copy that I have had the honour to make'. The history of the manuscript is extended by an undated note in Ottoman Turkish on folio 1a, which reads: Bu Kur'an-ı azimmem'in hafız cem'iyeti oldağının pederim bediyeten bana vermişler. Hafız Nazmeddin ('My father gave me this Glorious Qur'an as a gift on the day when the hafız assembly took place. Hafiz Nazmeddin'). The hafiz assembly was presumably the occasion when Nazmeddin's memorization of the Qur'anic text was tested, and his status as a hafiz approved.

The Qur'anic text, which fills folios 1b–39b, is presented in the ayet ber kenar format (see pp. 188–91). It was written in a competent hand, and the scribe maintained a consistent quality throughout the manuscript, despite working on a relatively small scale. There is fine illumination in the gold-on-gold style surrounding the opening pages of text (folios 1b–8a). Its layout is of the less common type in which the reduced text areas are framed by four panels and surrounded by elaborate head-pieces. In this case, the margins are filled with lotus scrolls executed in two tones of gold.

The decoration of the manuscript was never finished, however: the text frames are complete, but the tiny gold discs used to mark the end of each verse were left without the normal gold line that suggests a whorl or rosette motif, and the surah headings were left unilluminated. In addition, folios 2b–6a of the manuscript were clearly intended to contain an index of some kind, since each page was ruled in black and gold with a grid of small squares, but these were left blank. At some stage the surah titles were supplied in a small ragī hand, in red, and marginal ornaments were added by another, less competent illuminator.

The binding is faced with brown morocco and lined with lime-green embossed paper, which also forms a pair of fly-leaves. The use of this paper suggests that the covers of cat. 36 were remade in the late 19th century, although the decoration of the exterior is clearly contemporary with the manuscript. This decoration is lightly tooled in gilt and consists of a centre-piece of traditional form (a pointed oval with a scalloped profile) balanced by two pendants, and a framing band worked with a cable motif set between two pairs of gold rules. The main figure, which has a lighter, maroon ground, contains an arabesque design interspersed with gold dots. There is no flap.
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This manuscript is a fine example of metropolitan Qur‘an production at the beginning of the 19th century. The naṣīḥī hand is of excellent quality, and we learn from the colophon that it was the ninth copy of the Qur’an completed by Hafiz Seyyid Mehmed Şakir, a pupil of Ismail Zühdi. The teacher must have been Ismail Zühdi the Second, the brother of the famous calligrapher Mustafa Rakım, who died in AH 1221 (AD 1806–7)2 and this master–pupil relationship links Mehmed Şakir to a line of calligraphers that goes back to Hafiz Osman: Ismail Zühdi’s principal teacher was Ahmed Hüzi,3 who was a pupil both of Hacısancı İsmail Mustafa Efendi and of Mustafa Efendi’s own teacher, Eğrikapılı Mehmed Rasin, while Mehmed Rasin was in turn taught by Hafiz Osman’s greatest pupil, Yeşilkuşeli Seyyid Abdullah.4}

The illumination of the opening pages is notable for its brilliance and for its precision when observed in detail. A rich effect was achieved by the sophisticated use of two colours of gold and of highlights in red (over yellow gold) and a pale green (over green gold), as well as stippling and outlines in black. In general, the layout and filler motifs are solidly classical. The broad, lobed border, for example, contains a continuous pattern of split palmettes, arranged in pairs that face inwards and outwards by turns. The field within the palmettes is yellow gold, and the field on the outer side is green gold. The diminutive floral scrolls that run across them have yellow-gold blossoms where the background is in green gold, and vice versa. This classicism breaks down in the central area of each page, where there is usually a reduced rectangular text area. Here, though, these elements have been replaced by oval text areas defined by curiously shaped gold frames and surrounded by gold fields filled with floral scrolls.

The same delicacy of execution is found in the juz‘, hisb and sadhab markers set in the margins, in the decorative surah headings, and in the verse markers, which consist of rosettes of various types. The most common form has a plain, green-gold centre and six petals of yellow gold, set off with stippling.

On the last page of the manuscript the text area is divided into three. The upper compartment contains the last two lines of the Qur‘anic text, and the lower compartment contains three lines of a prayer, while the centre is occupied by the colophon, written in eight lines of riqa‘ within a round frame cut off at the sides. The area around the text is filled with floral scrolls on a gold ground, as on the opening pages.

The binding is original. The covers are of brown morocco and are decorated with a centre-and-corner composition lightly tooled in two shades of gilt, as were the two borders worked with a cabling motif. The doublures and matching ‘byleaves’ are of red morocco, with a central floral motif and borders drawn in the same tones of gold.
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This manuscript is very similar in quality to cat.37, and it was also written by a calligrapher called Mehməd Şakir. The two manuscripts were, though, the work of different scribes, who were careful to distinguish themselves from the numerous other calligraphers of the period with the same name. The scribe responsible for cat.37 identifies himself as 'Haϕr', while the Mehməd Şakir of cat.38 used the titles of a Naqshbandi shaykh, and the self-deprecating epithets employed by the two scribes are also very different. Haϕr Mehməd Şakir is merely 'the sinful slave', whereas Şeyh Mehməd Şakir used terms that show him both as an Ottoman loyalist – 'the slave who prays for the Sublime Ottoman State' – and as a Sufi, he is 'the dust on the feet of the followers of the Path who have knowledge [of the Divine Reality] and who have attained [spiritual enlightenment]'.

The separate identities of the two scribes are confirmed by the 'rīğ' hands of the two colophons, which are quite different. The naskh hands of the two men, on the other hand, are very similar, and what differences there are might have been accounted for by the change in format. Both manuscripts were copied with 15 lines to the page, but in cat.38 the text area is wider and longer, and the text fills a further 98 pages. The result is that the scribe did not have to squeeze so many words into each line, and the larger hand he allowed himself flows more elegantly and can be read more easily.

In Tabīb-zade Derviš Mehməd Şükri Efendi's inventory of the tēkkes of Istanbul and its suburbs and their incumbents, six shaykhs named Mehməd Şakir are recorded in the late 18th and 19th centuries. One of these men was called Hattar, 'the Calligrapher', and he became head of the Fena Tekkesi in Üsküdar in AH 1227 (AD 1792–3), only 20 years before cat.38 was written. Yet Hattar Mehməd Şakir was a member of the Cevd fraternity, and he must therefore be discounted. A more promising candidate was the head of another tekke in Üsküdar, that of Şeh Şabib Efendi, in more or less the same period. Tabīb-zade called this man 'al-Shaykh al-Sayyid Muhammad Shakir Efendi al-Naqshbandi', a set of names and titles that is almost identical to those used in the colophon of cat.38; and he died in AH 1227 (AD 1812), the year in which cat.38 was produced. If cat.38 was produced in Istanbul, as the quality of the hand and the style of illumination would suggest, then the head of the Şeh Şabib Efendi Tekkesi in Üsküdar may well have been its scribe.

The opening pages of cat.38, like those of cat.37, are dominated by work in two tones of gold, but the execution is not as fine. The border has a flatter edge, more scalloped than lobed, with the result that it lacks the dramatic flourish of the earlier example. The highlights are in red only, and the gold grounds are interrupted by tiny areas of palmette scrollwork in black on a green ground. The layout follows the classical model, with a rectilinear text area flanked by two panels filled with gold strapwork. The text frames on each page are in two tones of gold, as in cat.37, but the rest of the illumination – the surah headings, the verse markers and the marginal devices indicating each juz', hizb and sajda – is in an engaging polychrome style, which is solely classical in its sources but is sometimes rendered in new ways.

One example is the varied format of the illuminated panels on which the surah headings were inscribed. These were not confined to the standard layout, in which the centre is occupied by a shaped cartouche with a gold ground and the spaces on either side are filled with fragments of floral or palmette scrollwork on gold or coloured grounds. In many cases the central cartouches take the form of a broad oblique band, and the spaces on either side are filled with a variety of compositions, including one in which floral scrollwork on a blue ground is combined with a half-palmette motif, itself composed of diminutive palmette scrolls in black on a stippled gold ground. The last page of the manuscript (folio 33b) is divided between the last surah, al-Nās (cxxv), in the upper half, and the colophon, which is set in a pointed oval frame surrounded by illumination on gold and blue grounds.
The deep-brown morocco binding is decorated in a similar style to that of cat. 37, but the overall effect is not as pleasing. This is principally because the traditional form of centre-and-corner composition has been replaced by one based on a complex palmette form. There are three borders of cabling, painted in two tones of gold. The doublures and matching flyleaves are of mid-brown morocco and have a single cable border painted in gold and a central panel filled with a joggled diaper pattern. At the centre of each unit there is a single tooled dot. The flap is a later addition.
39

Single-volume Qur'an

Probably Istanbul, AH 1228 (AD 1813)

The scribe of this manuscript, Filibe Mehmed Efendi, was also responsible for a copy of the Qur'an in the Istanbul University Library (Ms.A.6702), dated AH 1223 (AD 1809–9). His epithet Filibe indicates that his origins lay in the city of Filibe (Plovdiv) in southern Bulgaria, but he must have come to Istanbul for his education since he recorded in the colophons of both books that he was a pupil of Damad-i (Ibrahim) Afif Seyyid Osman, also known as Deli Osman Efendi (d. 1855). Born Seyyid Osman and Filibe Mehmed Efendi had strong links with the Ottoman scribal bureaucracy in Istanbul. Seyyid Osman used the name Damad-i Afif (son-in-law of Afif) out of pride in his connection with Ibrahim Afif Efendi, a government clerk who died in 1768, while Filibe Mehmed Efendi’s leading pupil, Mehmed Şakir Recai (1804–74), began his career as a scribe in government service and eventually achieved a number of senior appointments.

This manuscript is comparable in quality to cat. 38. The scribe wrote in a well-formed, regular hand, as one would expect of a calligrapher of Mehmed Efendi’s distinction, and his desire for textual accuracy and precision of presentation is expressed in the colophon: he wrote this copy of the Qur’an ‘consciously of his incompetence in [reproducing] its canonical form, paying heed to each group of 10 verses’ and each ḥizb and juz’ division, and making sure it was correct inssofar as it was within his power’.

The illumination consists largely of gold-on-gold work. On the opening pages, the wide border is overlaid with four hump-shaped motifs, which protrude slightly into the margins. The use of colour is less restricted than in the two previous examples, so that, for example, orange brackets frame the cartouches at the centres of the panels above and below the texts, which are themselves defined by red bands. Narrower versions of these panels, with or without the coloured brackets, are used throughout as settings for the surah headings, which are in white ṭıqā.

Marginal notes in gold identify the ḥizb divisions, while the juz’ divisions and ṣaydaq are indicated by marginal ornaments. These have coloured as well as gold grounds, and they are all different in form: most are variations on the latus-, rosette- and palmette-based types current in the 18th century, but some incorporate Rococo scrolls and other Europeanizing elements. The verse markers are also very varied, and those that occur at the end of suras xii–xiv are larger and are inscribed in red with the takhrir, that is, the phrase Allāhu akbar (‘God is Most Great’). Fragments of floral scrollwork in gold fill many spare corners, including the spaces above the elongated ʾān of the baʿna′daḥ.

The Qur’anic text ends at the top of folio 368b. It is followed by an illuminated band, and the rest of the page is filled with the colophon, which extends on to folio 369a. In the space beneath there is a representation of a gilt glass vase containing a stem bearing a single rosebud. The setting suggests that a curtain has been pulled aside so that the flower can be seen through a shaped opening with an illuminated frame, which is in the same style as the decoration of the opening pages.

The dark-brown morocco binding has a centre-and-corner composition lightly tooled in gold, and the centre-and-corner elements, which have a lighter, maroon ground, are filled with palmette scrollwork interspersed with dots. There are two borders tooled with cabling, worked in two tones of gold. The doublures and ornamental ‘flyleaves’ of red leather are painted with a jogged diaper pattern, and at the centre of each unit there is a single tooled dot (compare cat. 38). The flap is a later addition.
... responsible for a copy of the \textit{Khamsa} (AD 1809–9). \textsuperscript{3} It was recorded in the city of Plovdiv in southern Bulgaria. Seyyid Osman, a student of Fihrib Mehmed Efendi, worked on the manuscript in Istanbul. Seyyid Osman and a few other scribes worked with Fihrib Mehmed Efendi's father in the government service.

The manuscript is written in a well-formed, square script, and the colophon indicates that it was [reproducing] an earlier manuscript with traditional decoration.

The opening pages feature intricate designs, including Basmalah and other decorative elements. The manuscripts are housed in ornate covers, each with a different design, and the covers are decorated with gold leaf and other precious materials.

As well as gold grounds, silver, and gold on silver grounds, there are ground patterns such as rosettes and palmettes. The decoration includes floral and foliate elements, as well as calligraphic inscriptions. The manuscripts are likely to have been produced for wealthy patrons, possibly members of the Ottoman court or other high-ranking officials.

The manuscripts are accompanied by detailed illumination, including intricate designs and calligraphic inscriptions. The style of illumination is typical of the early 19th century, with a focus on ornate and luxurious decoration.

The manuscripts are housed in their original bindings, which are decorated with gold leaf and other precious materials. The bindings are ornate and reflect the high quality of the manuscripts they contain.

The manuscripts are a significant example of Ottoman book illumination, and they are a testament to the craftsmanship and artistry of the time.
Single-volume Qur'an
Istanbul, AH 1234 (AD 1818–19)

246 folios, 11.5 x 8.1 cm, with 17 lines to the page.
Material A thin, light-brown leaf paper, burnished to a gloss, with approximately ten leaf lines to the centimetre, and no apparent rib shadows or chain lines.
Identification of the moulid markings is difficult, because of the highly fibrous nature of the pulp.
Text area 9.5 x 5.1 cm
Script: The main text in sa'di, with reading marks in red; inscriptions in marginal ornaments in white rijas; other marginalia in red or black ri'as; appendix on folio 246a in black ri'as.
Scribe: Mir Ibrahim al-'Afif, called Hafiz al-Qur'an.
Illumination: Extensive decoration on folios 18–22; text frames ruled in gold and black; verses marked by gold wheels set off with prickings; unfinished inscriptions; marginal ornaments marking divisions of the text and sa'di; decoration around the colophon on folio 246b; edges of the text block gilded with a small repeating leaf design.
Documentation: A colophon.
Binding: Later, with flap.
Accesion no.: QUB 170.

2. Gülün's foundation is called the Yeni Valide Camii ("New Mosque of the Sultan's Mother"), in order to distinguish it from the Fatih Valide Camii ("Old Mosque of the Sultan's Mother"), also in Üsküdar, which was built by Nureddin, the mother of Sultan Murad III, and completed in 1383.

The copyist responsible for this Qur'an gives his name in the Arabic text of the colophon as Mir Ibrahim al-'Afif, called Hafiz al-Qur'an, which probably translates into Turkish as Hafiz Ibrahim Afif Bey. He also recorded in the colophon that he was 'administrator of [the endowments of] the New Valide Sultan [Fatih Valide Sultan-i Ceditte]. Afif Bey held this post for some time, since 11 years later, in AH 1245 (AD 1828–19), he signed another Qur'an manuscript as 'Mir Hafiz Ibrahim, known as Afif, administrator of the mosque of the Valide Sultan.' The Valide Sultan was the title borne by the sultan's mother, and the religious endowments these women created were often located in Istanbul or its environs. This suggests that Afif Bey was resident in or near the city, and there is further evidence for this in the metropolitan style of illumination found in cat. 46.

The two colophons refer to the endowments that Afif Bey administered as belonging to a mosque founded by the Valide Sultan and bearing the epithet 'New.' The most prominent 'new mosque founded by a Valide Sultan' is the Yeni Camii on the shore of the Golden Horn in Istanbul. It was begun by Safiye Valide Sultan, the mother of Sultan Mehmed III (reg. 1595–1603), but it was not completed until 1665, at the expense of Turhan Valide Sultan, the mother of Sultan Mehmed IV. A second, more plausible candidate is the Yeni Valide Camii built in Üsküdar in 1708–10 by Gülün Valide Sultan, the mother of Sultan Ahmed III (reg. 1703–1730).

The text of cat. 46 is presented in the ayet ber kenâr format (see pp. 188–91) and was written in a small, competent hand. It is accompanied by an unusually large amount of additional information, written in a diminutive hand in red or black ink. The nature of this information is explained in a short text in Arabic composed by a man called Ahmed Şakir, which was copied between the end of the main text and the colophon, on folio 246a:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate!
Praise be to God who revealed to His slave His book written with divine certitude!
And blessing and peace upon His prophet Muhammad and his family and his companions! Moreover, since the form of this noble copy of the Qur'an is consistent with what is to be found in the books of this subtle science [of scriptural criticism], beware lest you change it or shun it or disavow it! I have shown the places where passages occur with the notation used for this, and I have adhered to the Kuran verse count at the ends of the relevant verses, marking every fifth verse with the letter 'ba' and every tenth verse with the letter 'sa'. I have explained at the beginning of every surah whether it was revealed in Mecca or Medina, as well as the number of verses in it by every count. Then in the margin I have indicated every verse where there is a difference of opinion between the acknowledged authorities [as to how it should be read], so that it is clear to everyone. I have also taken care to mark the division of the text into eighths and sevenths, in addition to the [36] 'aṣ'ar' and the [62] 'ahdzâ, so that I have marked each of the 360 divisions (also 'aṣ'ar') by name and number. I am the slave Ahmed Şakir – May God be with him and ensure that his actions are righteous!

Some of the information to which Ahmed Şakir refers was provided as a matter of course in most copies of the Qur'an: the notation in red indicating where pauses were made; the inclusion in the surah heading of the details of where the surah was revealed and how many verses it contains; and the use of marginal ornaments or inscriptions to mark the division of the text into the 36 'aṣ'ar' and sub-divisions thereof. Other elements are non-standard: the method of marking each fifth and tenth verse; the inclusion in the surah heading of the number of verses by all four counts; and the indication in the margins both of variant readings and of the division of the text into eighths and sevenths.
A comparison of this passage with the contents of cat. 40 shows that Afi Bey followed Ahmed Şakir’s programme, with the addition of marking the division of the text into eighths and sevenths. The manuscript has decorative devices marking the 30 aja’ and marginal notations in red riqa’ indicating each half-ju’a, each quarter-ju’a (called a hizb) and each half-hizb. This means that the text is divided into 240 divisions in all, rather than the 360 divisions foreseen by Ahmed Şakir. His total would have been reached if the eighths and sevenths had also been indicated, as well as the subdivision of both eighths and sevenths into eight parts.

In cat. 40 the realization of Ahmed Şakir’s programme meant a number of changes to normal scribal practice: the end of each group of five or ten verses is indicated by a letter in red placed over the final verse marker; short passages of Qur’anic text were repeated in the margin to show alternative readings; and the surah headings were written in the margin, in red riqa’ within shaped areas outlined in gold, while the illuminated panels within the text block that usually accommodate these headings were left blank. This last change was due to the addition to the surah headings of information on the number of verses by all four counts, which meant that the headings no longer fitted into the cartouche provided.

The elegant illumination of the manuscript is classical in layout and consists largely of gold-on-gold work. There is one main exception. This occurs on the opening pages of text, where the ornamental border is interrupted by a pair of hajus-shaped motifs filled with a naturalistic floral composition: an iris between a pair of roses. There are also tiny areas with a blue ground within the border.
Mehmed Emin Izzetî, who copied this manuscript in a good, vigorous hand, was active by AH 1234 (AD 1789–90), when he produced a Qur'an now in Istanbul University Library (MS.A.6759). He was also responsible for a copy in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (Isl.5.181), which was made for presentation to Sultan Selim III and completed in AH 1221 (AD 1806). Its outstanding Turkish Baroque decoration was signed by the illuminator Atlâ. Since Izzetî's work was considered worthy of the sultan, it can be presumed that he enjoyed high standing as a calligrapher. Yet the literary sources for the period provide no biographical details for him. Indeed, Izzet stated explicitly that he had not been able to find any information on Izzetî.

Izzetî's note on Izzetî occurs in his entry on one of the calligrapher's pupils, Hafiz Ahmed Izzet Bey. The pupil was appointed as a page to the Treasury Chamber of the Imperial Palace by Sultan Selim III in AH 1229 (AD 1774–5), and he had reached the rank of Agha there by AH 1232 (AD 1786–7). In the colophon of a Qur'an he copied in that year, he acknowledged Haci Mehmed Emin Izzetî as his teacher and described himself as an Agha of the Imperial Treasury. On this evidence it seems likely that Izzetî was a calligrapher tutor in the main imperial residence under Selim III (reg. 1789–1808) and perhaps under his immediate successors. Izzetî was still active in AH 1242 (AD 1826–7), when he was one of the two masters who granted a calligrapher's licence to one Ahmed Nazif, called Sukî.

If Izzetî taught in the Imperial Palace, he must have been resident in Istanbul, and this claim is supported by the metropolitan style of illumination used in cat.41. This work is certainly a great deal less adventurous than that found in the Dublin Qur'an by the same calligrapher. The layout of the opening pages is traditional, and they are decorated with gold-on-gold work, with red and dark-blue highlights; stippling was used to heighten the contrast between the two tones of gold. The margins beyond the outer border are set with blue and red floral spikes, which is a traditional feature, but the margins themselves are painted gold, which is not. The gold here skades from green through copper to yellow.

The surah headings and the marginal devices marking each juz', bīkāh and sūrahār are in the same conventional mode as the illumination of the opening pages, being similar but not quite as those in cat.50. An unusual feature of the manuscript is the complex configuration of rulings that frame the text on each page. These rulings can be read from the outside in as: a single red rule; a gold band between a pair of black rules on the outside and a single black rule on the inside; and a gold fillet defined by single black rules. The most unusual feature, however, is the gold fillet between single black rules placed near the edge of the page. This outer ruling, known as the karmand in Persian, is a standard feature of 19th-century Iranian Qur'ans. The margins of the manuscript also contain some of the same type of information as cat.42, but here the information on each surah is surrounded by a frame of gold petals. The colophon on folio 310a was written in black naskh within a circle surrounded by illumination in two tones of gold.

The binding is of dark-red morocco and is decorated with a centre-and-corner composition and a border that are lightly tooled in gilt with an arabesque pattern interspersed with dots. The ground of the tooled areas is of ve rather than red. The dark-red morocco doublures and flyleaves have gilt-rulled borders and are filled with a diaper pattern in which each shaped cell contains a single dot. The edges of the text block were painted in gilt with a design of flowery scrolls within a frame.
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tape pattern interspersed
the dark-red morocco
diaper pattern in
block were painted in
Single-volume Qur'an

Mustafa Rüştü, the scribe responsible for this Qur'an, was, according to the colophon, a pupil of Ahmed Zihni, who was called Safi-zade of Küfa and Kairib-zade. In a Qur'an of his own dated AH 1263 (AD 1846), Ahmed Zihni described himself as a pupil of Hasan Ferzi, called Kaltakçî-zade. Further information is provided by the colophon of a Qur'an manuscript completed by another of Ahmed Zihni’s pupils, Hafiz Ömer Zihni, in AH 1287 (AD 1870–71). There Kaltakçî-zade Hasan Ferzi is described as a pupil of Ahi Damadı Osman Efendi, who was also the master of Filibeli Mehmed Efendi (see cat. 39). This places Mustafa Rüştü in the metropolitan tradition of Istanbul calligraphers, but the quality of the illumination and binding suggest that the manuscript was produced in the provinces. The format of the manuscript is also noticeably larger than the Istanbul Qur’ans published here.

The illumination of the first pages of text (folios 18b–22a) is a rather uninspired version of the gold–on–gold style current in Istanbul earlier in the 19th century. For example, the lobed edge of the wide border has been replaced by a ruled frame of the type found on normal text pages; it consists of a wider band of green gold between two narrow bands of yellow gold, all outlined in black. At the same time, the border is separated from the central elements of the composition by a simple but intrusive black band, which has replaced the complex sequence of coloured rules and bands traditionally employed. Illumination in the style appears in the surah headings and framing the colophon on folio 334v.

The binding, which has a flap, is of brown morocco. It is not of high quality. The main field is filled with a diaper pattern composed of straight rules, each reworked with gold paint to resemble a sequence of small leaf motifs, as though it had been worked with a leaf-shaped tool. There is a single tooled dot in the middle of each cell, and the field is surrounded by a gilt border worked with a three-ply s-cable tool, interspersed with single dots. The doublures are modern.
Qur’an from Istanbul

...to the colophon, a
20th-century
inventor. In a Qur’an
written by a pupil of Hasan
ibn al-Nuri, the colophon of a
work by Hafiz Osman Zihni,
mentioned as a pupil of Aḥf
ibn Elendi (see cat. 33).

The manuscript was produced in
Istanbul, but the script was
inspired by the Istanbul
tradition. For example, the
above lines are found on
folios 19-30. The
lines were separated from the central
title, which has replaced
the traditional title. Illumination
is on folio 30a.

The page is of high quality. The
text is written in black
ink, with each leaf reworked with
two narrow bands of
scrolls and calligraphic
details. The field is
interspersed with...
Ottoman provincial production in the 19th century.
Blue-and-gold and âyet ber kenâr
by Tim Stanley

The seven Qur‘an manuscripts that follow (cat.43–9) all have opening pages decorated in what may be called the blue-and-gold style. As already noted (p.161 above), this term is used because the most important element in the layout, the wide border that encloses the text, is divided by gold half-palmette motifs into areas of gold and blue ground, and these are overlaid with scrolling tendrils set with diminutive floral motifs. Blue-and-gold illumination was used over a period of more than 400 years, and, as one would expect, the quality of the work varies and numerous minor variations and innovations occur, but in most cases its overall character was retained.

The gold-on-blue work continued the style of illumination found in copies of the Qur‘an written by Şeyh Hamdu’llah for Sultan Bayezid II (reg. 1411–1512), which was in turn based on the Qur‘an illumination produced at the Aqquyunlu court in Iran in the second half of the 15th century. In the 17th and 18th centuries, blue-and-gold illumination was by far the most common type employed in Ottoman centres of Qur‘an production, with the gold-on-gold style, from which the blue had been eliminated, in second place. It has been proposed (pp.161–69 above) that a change took place in the geographical distribution of the two styles – blue-and-gold and gold-on-gold – in the early 19th century, about the same time as the Ottoman Baroque style was introduced into Qur‘an production. Blue-and-gold work remained very popular, but in its traditional form it seems to have been associated with provincial Qur‘an production, while the gold-on-gold style became characteristic of that of Istanbul.

It is possible that cat.43 below, which is dated AH 1335–6, was produced in the capital, and, if so, it may well be the last example in the Collection where blue-and-gold work was done in Istanbul. The remaining six copies of the Qur‘an (cat.44–9) were almost certainly produced in the provinces, but in only one case (cat.44) has their place of production been identified, and, as a consequence, it has not been possible to characterize the stylistic traits of individual provincial centres within the broader blue-and-gold style.

In the colophons of two of the Qur‘an manuscripts (cat.47, 48) the scribe included in his name a nişab based on the name of a city in Anatolia. Emrullah Yelbi, who copied cat.47, called himself al-Amasi (‘of Amasya’), while Hafiz Ibrahim Nesib, the scribe of cat.48, made a similar reference to Karahisar-i Sahib modern Afyon Karahisar). But geographical nişabs such as these were used in a variety of ways – to show that the user was born in the location referred to, for example, or that he had been resident there for a long period prior to moving elsewhere, or that his ancestors had come from there. They do not necessarily show that the person who used them was still resident in the location mentioned at the time of writing. Only where a town became famous for a particular type of manuscript would a scribe have used the local nişab as a means of assuring potential buyers of its quality, and no evidence that either Amasya or Karahisar were famous for producing Qur‘an manuscripts in the 19th century has so far come to light.

Baltaci Hafiz and âyet ber kenâr
One region that did produce large numbers of manuscripts that are recognizably Ottoman, as well as others that are not, is the Hijaz. Scribes probably went to live there for a mixture of reasons. Residence near the Two Noble Sanctuaries in Mecca and Medina, known as mujāţarab, was chosen by some Muslims for reasons of personal piety, and for scribes there was also the opportunity to sell their work, which had the cachet of having been produced in the two holy cities, to the pilgrims who came there every year. We know from Mirza Habib’s Khatat se Khattâtı that one Istanbul calligrapher who chose to follow this course was ‘Baltaci Hafiz’ Mehmed Şakir, and he has been identified as the copyist of cat.44. Since the illumination in this manuscript is in the blue-and-gold style (with elements, it is true, in the gold-on-gold style), it has been suggested below that it was produced after Mehmed Şakir’s move to Arabia. Yet this Qur‘an stands apart from most of the other manuscripts in this ‘provincial’ group in one major respect, namely, that the text was not copied according to the system known as âyet ber kenâr,2 and the reason for this must probably be sought in Mehmed Şakir’s metropolitan background.
The Ottoman term ayet ber kenār may be translated as 'with freestanding verses', and it refers to a method of presenting the Qur'ānic text in which the text on each page consists of a discrete set of complete verses. As a result, each page ends with a verse marker. A standard ayet ber kenār manuscript always has 35 lines of text to the page, and this allows the coordination of this type of layout with the conventional division of the Qur'ānic text into 30 equal portions, called fasicules (ajza'at, singular ajza'). In an ayet ber kenār manuscript, most of these sections fill exactly 30 pages. The exceptions are the first section, which occupies slightly more than 30 pages since it also includes the double-page illumination at the beginning of the manuscript, and the 29th and 30th ajza'. These last two sections are also longer, because they consist of a large number of very short surahs, each of which is preceded by the space containing the surah heading. An ayet ber kenār manuscript therefore has just over 600 pages, or 300 folios.4

Five of the seven 'provincial' Qur'ān manuscripts catalogued immediately below (cat.43, 45–8) are ayet ber kenār copies, whereas, among the nine 'metropolitan' manuscripts catalogued above (cat.34–42), only cat.36, 40 and 42 have this type of layout.4 On this evidence, we might conclude that, in parallel to the contrast between the blue-and-gold illumination of 'provincial' Qur'āns and the gold-on-gold illumination of 'metropolitan' ones, we have a contrast between a 'provincial' group, in which the ayet ber kenār system predominates, and a 'metropolitan' group, in which it does not. Clearly, however, the division between the two groups is not strictly geographical.

It is notable that two of the scribes in the 'metropolitan' group who did follow the ayet ber kenār system, the Hacı Abdullah of cat.36 and the Mir İbrahim Aft of cat.40, did not give the names of their masters in their colophons, presumably because their masters did not belong to the 'grand tradition' of calligraphers from the school of Hafız Osman and were therefore not worthy of mention. By contrast, Báltaci Hafız Mehmed Şakir, the scribe of cat.44, named his master as the famous Istanbul calligrapher İsmail Zühdi. From this we may conclude that, because Mehmed Şakir was trained in the capital, where the ayet ber kenār system was not so widely employed, especially by scribes who saw themselves as part of the 'grand tradition', he did not follow the system himself.5 This fits with M. Üğür Derman's description of the challenge presented by the ayet ber kenār format: 'To fit the verses on the page exactly, the calligrapher must tightly space the letters on some lines of text and loosely space those on other lines. The ayet ber kenār format thus prevents the calligrapher from doing his best work, and for that reason the great masters did not use it.6

Template and 'edition'
The reason for adopting the ayet ber kenār system in writing some copies of the Qur'ān is related to the use of such manuscripts by hafız (singular hafiz), that is, the men and women who have learned the holy text by heart.7 Presumably a visual memorization technique was employed, and it was found that controlling the flow of the text in this way aided the storage of the text in the memory. Indeed, so long as the same template had been followed, a hafiz could use any ayet ber kenār Qur'ān as a prompt, since the same words would appear in roughly the same place on the same page of every copy. In the Khallil Collection's six ayet ber kenār Qur'āns from the 18th century (Part One, cat.27, 31, 33, 37, 39, 40), each of the scribes followed more or less the same basic template.10 If we compare the earliest of these manuscripts, cat.27, which was copied in A.H.1124 (AD 1712–13), with cat.37, which was copied six decades later, in A.H.1188 (AD 1774–5), for example, we find that, despite the time lag, the same folios in both manuscripts generally bear the same text. On folios 149b–150a, for example, we find verses 28–34 of the surah al-Kahf (xviii) on the right page, and verses 35–45 on the left page.

Their quality of interchangeability made ayet ber kenār Qur'āns the closest that Ottoman manuscript production came to achieving the uniformity offered by printing. In other words, manuscripts prepared according to the same template constituted a separate 'edition' of the text. Indeed, it is
possible that there was some connection between an increased familiarity with printing and the popularity of the ayet ber kenâr system in the later Ottoman period. We may speculate that in the debates over the legitimacy of printing texts in the Arabic script, someone introduced the interchangeability of printed copies of the Qur'an as an argument in favour of printing the holy text, and the ayet ber kenâr Qur'an was cited in the defence of manuscript production. It seems unlikely, however, that the ayet ber kenâr Qur'an was invented as a response to printing.

Previously, part one, cat. 27 was the earliest published example of an ayet ber kenâr Qur'an, and it seemed possible that the ayet ber kenâr system was developed during the revival of Ottoman Qur'an production that followed the crisis of the early 17th century. Yet evidence against this view is beginning to accumulate. It is clear, for example, that the term ayet ber kenâr was already current at the beginning of the 17th century, when it was used by Cafer Efendi in his eulogistic biography of the chief architect Sedefkar Mehmed Ağa, completed in AH 1013 (AD 1604–15). In one anecdote, Cafer recalls that he was sitting with Mehmed Ağa one day when an agent for a book dealer in the Grand Bazaar brought him a large-format copy of the Qur'an that was for sale at 30,000 akças. He describes the manuscript in some detail, stating inter alia that it was written in the style of Yaqut al-Mustasim on Daulatabadi paper and that it was ‘ayet ber kenâr throughout’. If the term was being used to refer to the system described above, as seems very likely, then Cafer Efendi’s familiarity with it in the 1590s indicates that it had been developed at an earlier date, even before the issue of printing copies of the Qur’an was first raised.

Variants
The interchangeability of ayet ber kenâr Qur’ans should not be overstated. Variants developed gradually, and on occasion completely new ayet ber kenâr templates were devised. One variant is shown by cat. 39 in Part One, which was written in AH 1201 (AD 1786–7). Folios 148–502a of this manuscript contain verses 25–31 and 32–43 of the surah Al-Kahf rather than verses 28–34 and 35–45, which we find on these pages in the ‘standard’ version. The variance is relatively minor, and it is clearly the result of the slippage of verses from one page to the next as the scribe progressed in copying a manuscript, since the variance increases gradually through the book.

A more dramatic variant is seen in Part One, cat. 40. The even more controlled version of the ayet ber kenâr system found in this manuscript incorporates another type of cue for the visual memorization of the text, which we may call ‘rubrication of congruence’. In this variant, the products of which are called tevâflu manuscripts (from tevâflu, ‘congruence’), parts of the text were written in red to show where the same group of letters appear in the same position on facing pages. Part One, cat. 40 shows that the rubrications were added after the text had been manipulated to produce as many congruences as the scribe could devise within the ayet ber kenâr system. The result is what, in the context of the deeply conservative late Ottoman tradition of Qur’an production, are some extraordinary page layouts. The highpoint of this manipulation occurs in the openings at the end of the surah al-Šûrà (xxvi), where the standard page layout was dismantled in order to maximize the congruences in the text on facing pages (see illustration in Part One, p. 125).

As a consequence of the rearrangement of the text on these pages, the ‘interchangeability’ of cat. 40 with cat. 27 and the Qur’an manuscripts from the intervening years is compromised. Folios 148b–150a of cat. 40 contain the same verses as folios 146b–150a of cat. 27, but folios 228b–229a contain verses 127–82 of the surah al-Šaffât (xxxvii), whereas in cat. 27 these pages contain verses 37–60 of the surah Sâd (xxxvii). All that has happened, in fact, is that the text in cat. 40 has been pushed back three pages by the redesign of folios at the end of al-Šûrà and, in cat. 27 we do indeed find verses 127–82 of al-Šaffât three pages earlier, on folios 226b–227a.

The ayet ber kenâr manuscripts of the 19th century also display significant variants. In cat. 45 below, for example, there are 19 rather than 15 lines to the page, and each jaw’ fills 10 rather than 20
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pages. As a result, the manuscript has only 155 folios. In cat.47, the āyet ber kenār system has been

adapted in a similar way. Here, though, there are 25 lines to the page. Another, less radical variant is

seen in cat.53, which was copied in Shumen in AH 1245 (AD 1827–8). This manuscript has 35 lines to

the page, but the text is arranged in such a way that the āja‘a’ occurs 16, 18 or 20 pages; examples are

the 2nd, 217th and 39th sections at folios 102a, 218a and 235a respectively. As a result, the manuscript

has only 245 folios.

As we shall see, the other Shumen Qur'āns in the Khalili Collection, cat.54–60 below, are all āyet

ber kenār copies with a more or less standard number of pages (305 to 308 folios), and the first of

these, cat.54, is of such high quality in other respects that, with cat.50, which was copied by the future

Kazakzer Mustafa İzzet Efendi, it marks the zenith of āyet ber kenār manuscript production as repre-

sented by the Khalili Collection. These two manuscripts suggest that in some circles there

was a change in the status of āyet ber kenār Qur'āns in the 19th century. While most ‘good’ calligraphers

such as Balâcî Hafız Mehmed Şakir avoided this system because it impeded their ability to display

their skill, a few leading scribes showed their consummate mastery of their art by over-coming the

limitations of the system to produce small āyet ber kenār Qur'āns of great quality, presumably

because there was a market for them. In cat.43, 46 and 48 below, however, the scribe followed the

same template as in the 18th-century Qur'āns in the Khalili Collection, and this arrangement of the

text was combined with the outmoded blue-and-gold style of illumination, also inherited from the

19th century. It is this combination of the 18th-century tradition, unaffected by developments in the

capital, that defines such 19th-century Ottoman Qur'āns as truly ‘provincial’.

1. See Bayani, Commentarii & Stanley


2. The other exception is cat.49, and

its scribe, Ibrahim Hâli Vehbi, pre-

sumably did not apply this system

because of the unusually large

format chosen for the manuscript.


(the study referred to in Bayani,

Commentarii & Stanley 1999, no.40, n.1;


5. Note, 100, that all eight copies in

the Shumen group (cat.53–60 below)

are āyet ber kenār manuscripts.

6. I have omitted cat.42 from this

discussion because it was copied so

much later than the other manu-

scripts in the Khalili ‘metropolitan’

group, and because, although it is

decorated in the gold-on-gold style

and was written by a scribe with

a link—a fairly weak link, it has to

be said—to the ‘great tradition’, the

poor quality of the manuscript

and the use of the āyet ber kenār

system link it more closely to the

‘provincial’ group.

7. Mustafa İzzet did use the āyet

ber kenār system, but his Qur'ān,

cat.50 below, is exceptional in

several other ways.


9. See, for example, Radio, 1.

12; Dernani 1998, no.43. The

connection is substantiated by a

case ownership note in cat.36

above, in which Hafız Nazmeddin

recorded that this āyet ber kenār

manuscript had been given to him

by his father ‘on the day when theihad

assembly took place’, that is, on

the day when he was officially recog-

nized as a hâfız by his examiners.

10. Bayani, Commentarii & Stanley

1999, nos.39 and 40 illustrate two

different variants of this template;

see below.


13. Cafer Efendi, facsimile,

folios 12b–13c; Cafer Efendi,

trans. Crane, p.36, where this phrase is

translated as ‘verses in the borders

throughout’.

14. Indeed, the existence of the

āyet ber kenār system can now

be traced even earlier, to the late

16th century, on the basis of an

Ottoman copy of the Qur'ān in a

private collection, which was made

by a scribe called Mustafa ibn

Ismail and completed in the first
ten days of Dhu‘ al-Hijjah 901

(31 July–9 August 1495).

15. The first description of this

system was given in Déroche 2002

in connection with a manuscript

in the National Library in Tunis

(15.14.146), copied in 1858 by a

Tunisian manâfiq called al-Hâj

Zahâry al-Hanafi. Déroche

showed that the manuscript was

a reworking of the tenfa’ikâr form

in the Maghribi style of script, and

its production was a symptom of

the continuing power of

Ottoman models in Tunisian

society in the 19th century. The

manuscript was published in

facsimile by ‘Abd al-Karim Ben

‘Abdallah in Tunis in 1883.
Single-volume Qur'an
Perhaps Istanbul, AH 1220 (AD 1805-6)

55 folios, 16.5 x 10 cm, with 11 lines to the page. 
Material: A thin, dark-cream leaf paper, burnished to a gloss, the margins stained a light pinkish-brown colour, with approximately ten lead lines to the centimetre, and no apparent rib shadows or chain lines. 
Text area: 10.1 x 4.9 cm. 
Script: Main text in naskh with reading marks in red, surah headings and inscriptions in marginal ornaments in white râghû' (other marginalia in gold râghû').

Scruby Muhammad, called al-Kullkisi Illumination: Extensive decoration on folios 1b-24; text frames ruled in two tones of gold and black; verses punctuated by gold whirls set off with red, blue and white dots, and pricking, or by polychrome rosettes and other circular motifs; surah headings; marginal ornaments marking divisions of the text and sajâdah; decoration around the colophon on folio 394a; edges of the text block not gilded.

Documentation: A colophon
Binding: Reused, with flap
Accession no.: QUR 36

2. See Bayani, Conradi & Stanley 1999, nos 59, 60, 62, 69, 71, 77, for example. In Indian Qurâns, these discs often mark a râghû' rather than a bâzâr.

Neither the scribe responsible for this Qur'an, Mehmed Hülasî, nor his master, Ahmed Kâjfî of Tophane, is known under these names in the published sources for the period, but it is possible that the teacher is the scribe recorded by Müstakim-zade under the name Ahmâd ibn Hasan. This Ahmed, a native of Istanbul, was the son of a muezzin in Tophane, a suburb of Istanbul on the Bosporus north of the Golden Horn, and he was still alive when Müstakim-zade completed his biographical dictionary in the 1780s.

Mehmed Hülasî wrote each page of text in the ayet ber kenâr format. His naskh hand is of reasonable quality, although the spacing between the lines and the grouping of words within lines on the same page are not always consistent. In other respects the manuscript shows an attempt at grandeur, and there are Indian as well as Ottoman features. The most obvious Indian feature is the use of a gold and blue disc-shaped motif to mark divisions of the text; here they are inscribed with the word bâzâr in white râghû' to mark the divisions of each juz' into four sub-sections. It is also possible that an Indian model was followed when the margins of each page were stained a light pinkish-brown colour that contrasts with the dark cream of the text area.

The opening pages are decorated in the traditional Ottoman manner. The text is surrounded by four panels of illumination, which are surrounded in turn by a broad border interrupted by husp-shaped motifs. The border and 'hasps' have gold arabesque motifs and polychrome floral scrolls running over parti-coloured, predominantly blue and gold grounds. Ornament on a gold ground extends into the margins outside the border, but severe trimming means that it is difficult to read the design.

The surah headings consist of a narrow gold band with the title written in white râghû' in the centre, and either end filled with fragments of floral scrolls. Similar fragments of scrollwork were also placed above the elongated sin of the basmalah. The juz' and sajâdah markers consist of a variety of elaborate devices inscribed in white râghû', and each group of ten verses is marked by the word 'asâr ('ten') in gold râghû'. The space below the colophon on folio 394a is filled with ornament on blue and gold grounds that is related to the work on the opening pages.

As noted above, the manuscript has been trimmed rather severely, and its present, rather poor binding would therefore seem to be a replacement. The main field has been stamped with a single mould to produce a centre-and-corner composition filled with floral motifs. The centre-piece, for example, contains a vase of florist's blooms, which include two roses. The field is filled with a lotus scroll on a smaller scale, and there are borders tooled with a cable motif. The whole composition has been painted in gold, with the motifs reserved. The pressure-moulded area does not take up the whole central portion of each cover, and it was extended above and below by a compartment filled with a tooled design. The doublures and flyleaves are of red morocco and were painted in gold with a diaper pattern of shaped cells, each containing a single dot.
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Single-volume Qur’an
Perhaps the Hijaz, AH 1231 (AD 1815–16)

The scribe responsible for this Qur’an manuscript gives his name in the colophon as Mehmed Şakir and states that he was a pupil of the late Ömer Vasfi, who was known as Hâce-i Sarây-i Hümâyûn ('master at the auspicious palace'), a title indicating that he taught calligraphy in the Imperial Palace. The teacher is readily identifiable as the celebrated calligrapher of this name, who was also known as Lâz Ömer Efendi (d. AH 1240/AD 1824–5).

This man did indeed have a pupil called Mehmed Şakir, who bore the nickname Baltaci Hafız and died in the Hijaz in AH 1250 (AD 1834–5). The hand in which the manuscript was written is sufficiently competent and regular to have been the work of a pupil of Lâz Ömer Efendi, but the illumination is coarsely drawn. If the Mehmed Şakir of cat. 44 was Baltaci Hafız, then the provincial quality of the illumination may result from its having been produced in the Hijaz.

The format of the opening pages of text is of the type in which the border is interrupted by four large hasp-shaped motifs. The border is filled with gold-on-gold work, while the ‘hasps’ have polychrome scrolls on a blue ground. An unusual feature is the way the central panels containing the text are framed on three rather than two sides by a band of interlace. The surah headings are unfinished: they are marked by blank gold bands. Each of the ‘hasps’ has two divisions and ‘saddah’ is marked by the same type of illuminated marginal device of a rather primitive character, while subdivisions of each ‘hasp’ are recorded by inscriptions in very small red signs. The last three lines of Qur’anic text are at the top of folio 356a, and the area beneath contains the colophon, which is written in a ruled circle surrounded by floral motifs in the kalkârî technique. The exposed edges of the text block and the spine of the binding have also been decorated in this manner.

The binding is of the same quality as cat. 43 but has a plain field. It is of dark-brown morocco and is ornamented with a traditional centre- and corner-composition framed by a double border of three-ply cabling painted in two colours of gold. The lotus scrolls within the centre- and corner-pieces are poorly defined, suggesting that old or poorly cut moulds were used to produce them. They are reserved on a ground painted gold. The paper doublures are modern replacements.
In the colophon as who was known as indicating that he taught in the celebrated \( \text{AD} \ 1124/\text{AD} \ 1814-5 \).\(^1\)

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border is interrupted with gold work, while feature is the way the two sides by a band blank gold bands.

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It is of dark-brown composition framed gold. The lotus scrolls indicating that old or poorly painted gold. The
45
Single-volume Qur'an
Ottoman provinces, mid-19th century

155 folios, 18.5 x 12.8 cm, with 19 lines to the page.
Material: A thin, cream European machine-made paper.
Text area: 12.5 x 6.2 cm.
Script: Main text in naskh, with readings in red; surah headings in white naskh; marginalia in red riqâ'.
Scribe: Hafiz Mustafa, called Helvacî-zade.
Illumination: Extensive decoration on folios 1b-2a: text frames ruled in gold, black, and red; verse markers in a variety of forms, all set off with red and blue dots and piquing; surah headings; marginal ornaments marking juz' divisions and sijdah; decoration around the end of the text on folio 155a and the colophon on folio 155b; edges of the text block not gilded.
Documentation: A colophon.
Binding: Contemporary, with flap.
Accession no.: q.12.n.23.

The scribe responsible for this Qur'an, Helvacî-zade Hafiz Mustafa Efendi, was a pupil of Hafiz Omer Cehdi, called Hare-zade. Although Helvacî-zade clearly thought that his master's name added lustre to his status as a calligrapher, Ömer Cehdi is not known from other sources, suggesting that he lived in a provincial centre. The colophon contains the date 1140, equivalent to AD 1727-8, but the character of the manuscript, including the machine-made paper on which it was written, shows that it could not have been produced before the 19th century.

The text is written in a small, tense hand. Its reduced size relates to the layout of the text, which is a variant of the ayet be'denâr system (compare cat. 47). The more common form has the text arranged so that one-thirtieth of the text (that is, one juz') fills exactly 10 folios, or, in codicological terms, a gathering of five bifolia (literally one juz' in the sense of 'fascicule'). Here the text was copied at double the density, so that each gathering of five bifolia contains one-fifteenth of the text, or two ayyet. Each juz' and each sijdah are marked by illuminated devices in the margins, and the surah headings have a gold 'tablet' between areas filled with floral scrolls, and some have a decorative frame. The colours vary a good deal, and the verse markers are also unusually diverse.

The illumination of the opening pages is of fairly traditional form, although the bands on either side of the text block have been replaced by a four-sided frame. This frame contains a series of cartouches with dark-blue grounds textured with tiny triple dots in white and overlaid with polychrome floral scrollwork; and the spaces between them are filled with gold-on-gold work. The same combination of blue and gold grounds overlaid with polychrome or gold scrolls appears in the broad outer border, while the pairs of large hasp-like motifs that interrupt the border are decorated with gold-on-gold work only.

The dark-brown morocco binding is of poor quality. The outer covers are decorated with a recessed centre-and-corner composition, with coarse floral scrolls in red against a ground painted gold, and a double border tooled in gilt with different designs. The doublures and flyleaves are of bright-red morocco with gold-ruled frames.
Ottoman provincial production

... was a pupil... thought that his... to be known from... contains the... script, including the... have been produced... to the layout of the... The more common... one juz’... fills exactly... one juz’... in the... so that each gathering... juz’... and each sajdah... each sajdah... headings have a gold... frame. The... diverse... although the bands... frame. This frame... with tiny triple dots in... spaces between them are... gold grounds overlaid... while the pairs of large... on gold work only... covers are decorated... scrolls in red against... different designs. The... frames.
Single-volume Qur'an
Ottoman provinces, 13 Safar 1262 (6 March 1844)

303 folios, 18.6 x 13.6 cm, with 15 lines to the page
Material: Fine buff European machine-made paper, lightly burnished
Text area: 21.5 x 13.5 cm
Script: Main text in naskh, with reading marks in red; surah headings in white riqā'; marginalia in gold riqā'
Scribe: al-Sayyid Hafiz Ahmad al-'Asim
Illumination: Extensive decoration on folios 1b-22; text frames ruled in gold, black and red; verses marked by gold six-petal rosettes or gold whirls, all set off with red and blue dots; surah headings; marginal ornaments marking juz' divisions and safādah; decoration around colophon on folio 320b; edges of the text block gilded with a repeating scrolling leaf pattern
Documentation: A colophon
Binding: Contemporary, with flap
Accession no.: Q05-19
Published: Geneva 1991, no. 36

1. It is, of course, possible that the decoration was added at a different time and at a different place from the time and place of copying.

According to the colophon, Seyyid Hafiz Ahmad Asim, the scribe responsible for this copy of the Qur'an, was a pupil of the Istanbul calligrapher Ibrahim Şevki, who was also the master of Suleyman Vehbi (see cat. 51). Ahmed Asim copied the text in the aṣbat ber benāt format, in a regular hand with a strong contrast between thick and thin and a consequent tendency to angularity in some letter forms.

It is not known where Ahmed Asim worked, but the distinctive decoration suggests that, like Suleyman Vehbi, he lived in a provincial centre. The illumination on folios 1b-22 includes a wide border with areas of blue and gold ground, in the traditional manner, but the treatment is entirely new. The long-established conventions that the blue and gold grounds were separated by a pattern of gold half-palmettes, and that both were overlaid with polychrome floral scrolls, have been abandoned. Instead, an undulating trail of prickled gold leaves and flowers divides the inner gold ground from the outer blue ground, both of which are overlaid with long pink serrated leaves. (These leaves are a straightened-out version of the leaves painted on the binding.) Twelve of these leaves spring from the trail of gold flowers and leaves, while four pairs are attached to the curious bow motifs set at the centre of each side. The border is framed by a lightly cusped gold band. The treatment of the area immediately around the text is also novel. The text is set in an uneven, truncated ovoid frame filled with gold floral elements on a mid-blue ground.

The surah headings were written in white riqā' on a plain gold ground. Hizb is marked by the word hizb written in gold riqā', while each juz' and each prostration is indicated by a floral motif inscribed with the number of the juz' or the word sajda written in white riqā'.

The text ends on folio 301b, and the following page is blank. The colophon was added on folio 302b and is surrounded by gold scrollwork similar to and of the same modest quality as that on the binding.

The outer covers of the binding are of dark-olive morocco. They have floral centrepieces painted in gold and lightly tooled and gilt borders. The doublures and flyleaves are of glossy yellow paper.
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Single-volume Qur'an

Ottoman provinces, 2 Rabi' al-Awwal. 1260 (22 March 1844)

The scribe of this manuscript, Emrullah Vehbi of Amasya, wrote in the colophon that 'this is the eleventh complete copy of the Qur'an that God (May He be exalted!) has granted him success in writing, and he desires of Him (May He be praised and exalted!) that He allow him to complete two hundred or more'. Another of the 11 copies that Emrullah Vehbi had made by 1844 may have been a Qur'an now in the Topkapi Palace Library (Ms. M. 41), which was signed by a scribe called Seyyid Emrullah of Amasya and dated AH 1254 (AD 1838–9).

The layout of this manuscript is similar to that of cat. 43. The text is presented in the 'ayet kenär format, but each juz' fills 10 pages rather than 50. The first juz' fills folios 1b to 6a; the second, folios 6b to 11a; the third, folios 12b to 16a; and so on until folio 146a. As usual, the last juz' fills more space, occupying folios 146b to 157b, a total of 11 pages. The beginning of each juz' is marked by one of a wide range of illuminated marginal devices, which are also used to mark sayidah. The subdivision of the juz' into quarters is also indicated in the margin: the word bişb written in tiny red script was placed at the beginning of the second and fourth quarters, and the word nisf was written in the same hand at the beginning of the third quarter, where it is accompanied by half of one of the illuminated devices used to mark each juz' again.

Since the scribe wished to fit the text of each juz' into 10 pages, more text than usual had to be fitted onto the opening pages. In order to achieve this, the first surah, al-Fatiñah, was written at the top of folio 1b, followed immediately by the beginning of al-Baqarah (11), which continues on folio 2a. The headings of both surahs were set in illuminated panels, but the panel for al-Baqarah is interrupted by the end of the text of al-Fatiñah.

The first two pages are surrounded by a broad illuminated frame with the traditional combination of blue and gold grounds, but they are arranged so that the blue area forms a continuous zigzag, and the polychrome floral scrolls that normally run over both blue and gold areas have been replaced by scrolls bearing green-gold rosettes and ending in a small orange leaf. In addition, there is one large orange flower in each corner. Similar illumination is found beneath the colophon on folio 152a, but here the blue and gold are replaced by green and green-gold. The colophon itself is written within a tapering, triangular area and is flanked by two roses shown on triangular green-gold grounds.

The binding, which has a flap, is faced with dark-brown morocco on the exterior. The upper and lower covers are divided into a main field and a wide border, and the border is framed on both sides by gilt bands worked with a three-pley s-cable tool. Both field and border are filled with a gilt diaper pattern formed by painted leaf motifs, and each cell has a tiny tooled rosette at its centre. The red morocco doublures and flyleaves have a wide border defined by gilt rules, and in the central fields gold rules form a rectilinear grid with a rosette tooled at each crossing. At the same time, these rosettes are set at the centre of the cells of a painted diaper pattern, which have a complex, 'jogged' outline. The reverse of the flyleaves and the facing pages were painted mint-green and brushed with gold within a gold diaper pattern. Unusually for this period, the edges of the text block (the manuscript without its binding) were not painted in gilt.
Ottoman provincial production

The colophon that is to be exalted has raised and exalted! The Topkapi Palace of Allah of Amasya and is presented in the first two folios 1b until folio 146, a total of 11 pages. The four folios were placed at the written in the same half of one of the text than usual had surah, al-Fatiha, opening of al-Baqarah and set in illuminated text of al-Fatiha. With the traditional layout, the blue area forms run over both blue sections and ending in each corner. Similar to the blue and gold are within a tapering, thin-gold grounds. On the exterior, the border is blue. Both field and spire, and each cell has red leaves a wide rectilinear grid are set at the centre of the text block.
Single-volume Qur'an
Ottoman, AH 1281 (AD 1863-4)

In the colophon of this manuscript, which was composed in very uncertain Arabic, the scribe gives his name as Hafiz Ibrahim Nesib of Karahisar-i-Sahib. This associates him with the town in west-central Anatolia now known as Ayyon or Ayyon Karahisar. This man may also have been the scribe of a copy of the Qur'an in the Topkapi Palace Library (MS.M.46), which was signed by Hafiz Ibrahim Nesib and dated AH 1272 (AD 1855-6), as well as of two other copies in the same library (MS.M.43, M.50), which were copied by Hali Ibrahim Nesib in AH 1250 (AD 1833-4) and AH 1259 (AD 1842) respectively.

The manuscript was copied in the 'ayet bev kemâr format, in a well-spaced, confident hand that shows Ibrahim Nesib taking good advantage of the unusually large size of the manuscript. Indeed, this manuscript, which measures 23.8 by 15.4 centimetres, is larger than the other 19th-century Ottoman Qur'ans published here, with one exception (cat.48). The others measure between 14.4 by 10 centimetres (cat.57) and 20 by 13.5 centimetres (cat.42). In the late Ottoman period, Qur'an manuscripts were sometimes classified by size as 'small', 'vezirî' and 'large', and it seems likely that cat.49, which measures 34.6 by 23 centimetres, is a 'large' manuscript, while cat.48 is a vezirî manuscript, and the remainder are 'small'.

The illumination of the opening pages of text, folios 1b-2a, is in a fairly traditional style. There are areas of blue and gold ground in the wide border, but the blue element can be seen as atrophying; it is dark in tone and is confined to arrowhead-shaped areas, which are arranged in two rows. The panels above and below and on either side of the text are decorated with gold-on-gold work set off with stippling and highlights in red and green, a type of ornament that reappears on the colophon page. The surah headings have varied forms that are all in the same general style as the opening pages, and the verse markers also vary. Marginal devices indicate each sajâb, juz' and half-juz', while quarters of a juz' are shown by the letter ha' (for hâ) written in red.

The most original element in the decoration of the manuscript is the splendid illuminated setting for the colophon on folio 306a. It has something in common with the painted designs found on contemporary leather bindings, since it consists of leaves and floral motifs rendered in two tones of gold. The signature of the illuminator, Haci Keskin, occurs at the bottom of this page.
Ottoman provincial production

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Single-volume Qur'an

Ottoman, 16 Rabi' al-Aakhir 1282 (8 September 1865)

This manuscript belongs to the largest type of Qur'an produced in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century (see cat. 48). According to the colophon on folio 102b, it was made for Haci Anber Ağa, 'chief eunuch of the harem of the late Haci Ibrahim Paşa Serasker', and the scribe responsible was Ibrahim Halil Vehbi, known as 'al-Ch.b. kshî'. He wrote a fairly good hand that is a 'blown up' version of naskh of normal size, indicating that his repertory of scripts lacked styles such as muhaqqiq that are based on a larger module. Errors in the text have been gilded over and rewritten.

The illuminator of this manuscript also met the challenge presented by the increased size of the text by being decorated by 'scaling up' the size of traditional designs as one would now 'blow up' a photocopy or photograph. On folios 18–22 the text is written within a circular space defined by a crescent-moon motif in a green tone of gold. This composition, which can be related to the central circular motif found in the calligraphic form known as the bukīz-i çerîf, is surrounded by very schematic scrollwork in two tones of gold, and there are horizontal panels above and below. The wide border, which has areas of blue and gold ground, is overlaid with scrolls set with gold leaves and yellow, mauve, white and orange flower buds. It is interrupted by haphazard motifs with blue grounds. Here the same polychrome scrolls are mixed with gold palmette motifs.

The illumination of the manuscript also includes marginal devices indicating each ziyâ and flower motifs set in the margin that mark each sajdâh. Numerous other divisions of the text are noted in red riqâ'

The brown leather binding is not of high quality. The central fields are filled with a diaper pattern similar to that seen on cat. 47, and there is a border formed by gilt bands worked with a four-ply s-cable tool and outlined with gilt rules. The space between the field and the border is blank except for a central gold rule. There are modern paper doublures.

1. A Qur'an copied by Ibrahim Halil Vehbi, known as al-Ch.b. kshî, in 1282/1865–66 was sold at Sotheby's, London, on 16 April 1994 (lot 183).
3. See Sefvat 1996, nos 29–33, for example.
the Ottoman Empire in 1528, it was made by the increased designs as one would expect written within a module. This composition, graphic form known for its two tones of gold, and which has areas of blue and red, mauve, white and gold grounds. Here the divisions indicate each jaz' as other divisions of the ground are filled with a diaper pattern. gilt bands worked between the field and paper doublures.
Ottoman provincial production
Ottoman provincial production
The Baroque and after

by Tim Stanley

The illumination of the three manuscripts that follow (cat.50–52) shows an unprecedented departure from the norm in the history of Ottoman Qur'an production. The decoration is diverse in character, but, taken together, the three examples show how many of the conventions of Qur'an illumination were first adapted to a new stylistic language and then abandoned altogether. The first phase, adaptation, is seen in the decoration of cat.50 and 51. The illumination of cat.50, which was produced in Istanbul in 1824, is a late and distinctive example of the Ottoman Baroque style that flourished between the 1800s and the 1820s. The layout of the open pages is similar to that found in Ottoman Qur'an manuscripts of the 18th century (see Part One, cat.27–41, for example), but the ornament that fills it consists of c-scrolls and ribbed, shell-like elements, while the colour scheme is dominated by a combination of pastel colours, pink and pale blue. In cat.51, which was copied in Bursa in 1856–7, the layout of the opening pages is also traditional, except for the circular shape of the text areas, but the motifs, which include baskets of flowers, can be attributed to the Ottoman version of the (French) Empire style that replaced the Baroque style after 1816.

The second phase is illustrated by cat.52, which is dated 1857–8 and was copied in an unknown centre. Its illumination is also in the Empire style, but the traditional layout of the opening pages has been replaced by a totally new arrangement in which the straight rules that had always defined the different parts of such compositions have been entirely eliminated. The new composition is much simpler, because the roughly oval text areas are surrounded by a unified border, but its simplicity is obscured by the variety of motifs that form this border. Bunches of roses and other flowers issue from acanthus scrolls in gold and white, which are linked by blue and white ribbons, and the panels for the surah headings have been replaced by gold, urn-like motifs.

Only a small proportion of the Qur'ans produced in Istanbul in the 19th century were affected by these changes, and it has been suggested above (pp.161–69) that the emergence of the gold-on-gold style as the predominant type of Qur'an illumination in the capital was a conservative response to the introduction of the Ottoman Baroque style in the 1800s. This response may have had a political aspect, since there is good evidence that the use of the Baroque style indicated an association with the Ottoman court. Not all the reactions were negative, however, for it was presumably because of the prestigous court connection that the Ottoman Baroque style seen in cat.50, and its successor, the Ottoman version of the Empire style seen in cat.51 and 52, contributed to the development of distinctive types of Qur'an illumination in some Ottoman provincial centres. The most notable of these was Shumen in what is now north-east Bulgaria (see pp.222–33).

Decadence or change?
The study of the Baroque and Empire styles in illumination is not well advanced, and this no doubt reflects a prejudice current in Republican Turkey that such illumination was ‘derivative’ and therefore lacking in a Turkish identity in a way that earlier styles had not been. Such denigration of these 19th-century styles of illumination is based on essentialist assumptions about the relationship between art and national identity – assumptions that are entirely anachronistic in the context of the Ottoman empire, the population of which was multiethnic in character, and where identity was based on religious affiliation. The prejudice against illumination of this kind, which, in effect, categorizes it as entarte Kunst (‘degenerate art’), has been reinforced by the misinterpretation of Ottoman history in the 18th and 19th centuries, which has been seen as a period of ‘national’ decadence in the face of the increased power of other European nations.

According to the standard account developed by a variety of authorities in the 20th century, the first phase of the cultural subjection of the Ottoman Turks to Western nations occurred in the reign of Sultan Ahmed III (1703–1730), after the first Turkish ambassador to France returned from the court of Louis XV in Versailles in 1721. The ambassador, Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi, gave an enthusiastic report of what he had seen there, and this led the sultan and his intimates to adopt the
French court as a role model. This gave rise to what was dubbed the Tulip Period, a time of spendthrift frivolity that came to an abrupt end when the Patrona Hallî revolt in Istanbul caused the fall of Ahmed III in 1730. Despite this interruption, the Tulip Period, we are told, was the first phase in the Westernization of Ottoman society, an ineluctable process that dominated the rest of the empire's history.

This interpretation of the reign of Ahmed III is now being successfully challenged. One example of this revision concerns the pleasure ground of Sâ'dabad in the north-west suburbs of Istanbul, which is the architectural ensemble of the 1720s that has received the most scholarly attention. Sâ'dabad has long been interpreted as Ahmed III's response to Versailles, but, as Can Erteman has shown, it was actually a self-consciously Ottoman response to the Safavid palaces of Isfahan. It fits into a trend that can be detected in all the arts of the period, which reflect Ottoman engagement with the Safavid state in Iran rather than cultural submission to France. So, while Iran was the source of the major non-Ottoman elements in the arts of Ahmed III's reign, Western Europe played a relatively minor role as a source of artistic ideas.

An early example of the eclectic mode of decoration that appeared under Ahmed III is the illumination of a poetic qu'âb written in a large and accomplished nastâ'îy hand by Velîreddîn Efendi in a ms (AD 1710-11). The text of the poem, a qaṣîr in Turkish, was written on the diagonal, and an acanthus-scroll pattern of Western origin is found in the triangular areas in the top-left and bottom-right corners, which contain the dedication and the colophon respectively. The rest of the decoration, which fills the spaces around the text in the main field, consists of an unusual variant of the fantastic lotus scrolls known in Turkish as hatayî. They were a standard element in Ottoman and Safavid ornament of the 16th and 17th centuries, but here the accomplished illuminator gave them an unusually strong three-dimensional quality, made them 'grow' from an invisible base-line like real plants, and painted them in an unusual range of pastel colours that, as in cat.50, includes pink and a pale blue. Such pastel shades were popular in 17th-century Safavid painting on paper, and in this period, too, the Safavids created similar, quasi-illusionist arrangements of the traditional lotus-scroll motifs. It is possible to claim, therefore, that the hatayî element is borrowed from contemporary Iranian design, just as the acanthus scrolls were borrowed from Western Europe.

The multilateral nature of Ottoman cultural borrowings in the reign of Ahmed III soon ended, however. The cause was the collapse of the Safavid regime in 1722, as the result of an Afghan invasion. For more than two centuries, the Safavids, as the rulers of one of the most important Shi'i states in history, had presented a permanent ideological challenge and an intermittent military threat to the Ottomans, who ruled the most important Sunni state in the region. After 1722 this ideological challenge was muted, and the military threat disappeared, if only temporarily. At the same time, Iran ceased to be a significant international force in terms of artistic production. The patronage of the Afšâharid, Zand and Qajar dynasties which eventually succeeded the Safavids was much feebler, and the art made for them left no perceptible mark on the art of the Ottomans, who henceforth had to turn to Western Europe for new artistic ideas. This was the setting for the appearance of an integrated Ottoman Baroque style in the mid-18th century, which can therefore be attributed to the disappearance of the empire's great Shi'i rival in the east rather than to the adoption of French political or social ideas.

Delayed Baroque

The first major monument of the Baroque style in architecture was the Nurúsmaniye mosque in Istanbul, which was commissioned by Ahmed III's successor, Sultan Mahmud I, in 1748 and completed under Mahmud's brother, Osman III, in 1755. In this building, the basic forms were relatively unchanged (with the major exception of the horseshoe-shaped courtyard), but in the architectural ornament the classical Ottoman style was entirely replaced by a new type of decoration. This has its own distinctive identity, but it was clearly created on the model of the Western European Baroque. The same process
can be seen at work in the fine illumination of a document issued by Mahmud 1 in 1744. The structure of the decoration is traditional, but the motifs employed are predominately of Western European origin. They include two large bunches of flowers depicted in a realistic manner, a Baroque framing device and a pattern of spiralling scrollwork set with flowers of recognizable types.

By the first decade of the 18th century, a fully integrated form of Ottoman Baroque illumination was in use in Istanbul. The earliest published example in the decoration of a Qur'an manuscript is from late in the reign of Sultan Selim 11 (1789–1807), when a very fine copy in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, was prepared for presentation to the sultan himself. The text was written in Rajab 1221 (September–October 1806) by Mehmed Emin İzzet Efendi, the scribe of cat.41 above, while the decoration was the work of an illuminator called Ata Efendi. As in cat.50, the layout of the opening pages is very close to those of 17th-century Ottoman copies of the Qur'an, but the Baroque motifs that fill the various spaces within it are entirely novel, at least in terms of Qur'an manuscripts, and the colour scheme employed is also new. A further similarity between the two manuscripts is that cat.50 also has a connection with the Ottoman court in Istanbul, since its scribe, the future Kazasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi, was employed there as a court musician at the time that he copied it, in 1824.

The delay in the adoption of the Ottoman Baroque style for Qur'an manuscripts may have been the result of its Western European, non-Muslim associations. In origin, the Baroque style was a specifically Catholic phenomenon, formulated in Italy around 1600 to express the reborn confidence of the Church as it promoted the Counter-Reformation. This ‘primary’ form of the Baroque employed in Catholic Europe (and in its overseas dominions in Africa, Asia and South America) was anti-Protestant but also anti-Ottoman in spirit. In Valleria, Baroque architecture still expresses Malta’s role as a bulwark against Muslim expansion, and in Hungary and Croatia it was the style employed for major buildings erected after these territories passed from Ottoman hands into the possession of the Habsburgs at the end of the 17th century. The Ottoman Baroque does not, of course, belong to this ‘primary’ movement. Like the Baroque current in Protestant countries such as England and Denmark and in Orthodox Russia, it is a ‘secondary’ form that developed after the style had lost its overt connection with Catholicism.

Each of the ‘secondary’ forms of the Baroque reflected the specific local conditions that gave rise to it. The most easily understood example is the adoption of the Baroque in Russia, where it represented the modernity towards which Peter the Great drove his country with relentless energy between 1698 and his death in 1725. As noted above, this desire for Westernization was not behind the Ottoman adoption of the Baroque, which occurred after Islam had been removed as a source of new artistic ideas in 1722. The question remains, however, why these new ideas were thought necessary. The answer is linked to the sultan’s position in the Ottoman political order, which the court generally perceived as too weak. Since this problem was not resolved until the reign of Mahmud 11 (1808–1839), it continued to be relevant to artistic changes brought about by the court up to and including the introduction of the Ottoman version of the Empire style under this sultan.

During the 17th century, the personal authority of the Ottoman sultan was constrained by a ramified and complex political system in which he had to share power with other forces in Ottoman society (see part one, pp.60–64). The classical Ottoman style that had been formed in the 16th century maintained itself relatively unchanged during this period, but it became associated with a political order in which the sultan was relatively powerless. When the court began to seek ways of reviving past glories, as it did under Ahmed 111, it developed a renovated form of Ottoman art in which Western European elements played a minor part, and this was used to distinguish the work done for the sultan from the mass of contemporary production in the increasingly hackneyed classical style. Although Ahmed 111’s political programme failed in the short term, his aspirations were shared by his successors, under whom the Ottoman Baroque style developed. But this style, too, became associated with the enemies of sultanic power, and after Mahmud 11 had asserted his right to direct rule, most notably
with the violent dissolution of the Janissaries in 1826, he replaced it with the Empire style. Indeed, the Nusretiye mosque in Istanbul, which Mahmud built to celebrate this 'victory', was the last important monument of the Baroque style.

**Provincial networks**

Cat. 51 shows that Empire illumination was added to Qur'an manuscripts produced in Bursa, whether the painting was done there or in Istanbul. An attribution to Bursa itself is certainly possible, given the many links that Qur'an production and other calligraphic activities carried out there had with Istanbul, which were no doubt due to the frequent movement of calligraphers and would be calligraphers between the two cities. Indeed, the scribe who copied cat. 51, Seyid Süleyman Vehbi, was the pupil of the Istanbul calligrapher Hafiz Ibrahim Şerki, and Şerki’s own master was Ismail Zühdî, who was a calligraphy tutor at court. Equally, Süleyman Vehbi’s most famous pupil, Halil Şükri, left Bursa and settled in Istanbul, where he flourished until the 1870s. Nevertheless, other pupils of Süleyman Vehbi appear to have remained in provincial obscurity in Bursa, where they trained pupils of their own. Two calligrapher’s licences in the Khalili Collection suggest, however, that, without contact with metropolitan calligraphers, the quality of the work done in the city declined sharply. In this context, it is easy to understand why local calligraphers were not employed to work on the inscriptions of the Great Mosque of Bursa after they were damaged in the severe earthquake of 1875. Instead, the leading calligraphers Şefik Bey and Abdullah Efendi were sent from Istanbul to undertake this work.

Contact with the capital is also an important element in the history of Qur'an production in other cities, even distant Cairo. The Egyptian capital moved beyond the political control of Istanbul in the early 19th century, but scribal activity there continued to define itself in relation to the Ottoman capital, as did illumination. It would therefore seem likely that Istanbul would have played an important role in the development of Qur'an production in Edirne, the city north-east of Istanbul that succeeded Bursa as the Ottoman capital. Yet Edirne developed a tradition of its own, at least in terms of calligrapher’s licences. While Istanbul licences generally bear a limited number of signatures, all the published examples from Edirne, including one in the Khalili Collection, contain the names of the very large number of masters who were present at the pupil’s examination. This makes them similar to, but not the same as, the licences issued to scribes working in Shumen (see pp. 222–23 below). Since the published Edirne licences date from the period 1832–65, and the earliest therefore predates the rise of Shumen as a major centre of Qur'an production at the end of the 1830s (and the development of the distinctive Shumen style of illumination used in the licences), it seems likely that the Shumen type of scribe’s licence was inspired by that in use in Edirne. In other words, provincial centres of production were not restricted to a bivalent relationship with Istanbul. They also influenced one another.

Istanbul was, nevertheless, the main motor for change, and the main source of patronage. As we shall see in 'The Shumen phenomenon' below, the development of this, the most important provincial centre of Qur'an production in the mid-19th century, was probably the result of contact with the court late in the reign of Sultan Mahmud II, and A. Süleyman Uşver’s researches suggest that most of the Shumen production was literally carted off to Istanbul for sale in the market district there. As we have seen (pp. 88–90), production in other provincial centres that did not seem to have received the same attention from the court remained frozen in time, their illuminators repeating the classical Ottoman blue-and-gold style until the production of Qur'an manuscripts on a large scale ceased in the 1870s.
The Baroque and after

1. These motifs might well be called Rococo rather than Baroque, but since the emergence of Ottoman Baroque in the mid-18th century was contemporary with the Rococo phase of the Baroque in other parts of Europe, this distinction is not very meaningful.
2. Compare Nadir 1986, no.62, which is dated 1784.
3. A rare exception is Aksou 1977.
6. See, for example, the discussion of the revival of Ottoman lacquer production at this time in Khalili, Robinson & Stanley 1996–7, part one, pp.222–3.
7. Istanbul University Library 368.11.144, folio 82; see Derman 1992, no.84. The calligrapher can be identified with the future pelhydium of this name, who died in office in 1758 (see Mitatcim-zaide, ed. Mahmud Kenal, pp.715–16) and, since it bears the title in Arabic, ‘vaxvihed min al-shahih’ (‘For one of the great men of state’), the qipsh appears to be a presentation piece he prepared very early in his career, after his training by Durruq-zade Ahmed Efsendi, who died in 1721 (ibid., p.643). It is possible, however, that it was written in 1720–11 but illuminated at a later date.
8. See, for example, Candy 1991, pls 73, 75; Stanley 2004, pls 80, 81.
9. See, for example, Stanley 2004, pl.85. The main field of this silk hanging is decorated with a highly stylized lotus-spool ‘tree’, which is visited by butterflies and motifs in the master of the illustrations in European herbaria (see Gray 1995, Canby 1993, pls 72, 73). Indeed, showing lotus scrolls as though growing upwards from an invisible base line was also probably a reflection of Indian and European designs based on realistic plant motifs. 10. In this context it is worth noting that not all the problematically indentifying elements in the art of Ahmed ali’s period were necessarily direct borrowings. From the reign of Shah Suleyman Safavi (1666–69), Iranian art began to incorporate a significant Western European component, which had often reached Iran via India. So when Ahmed ali and his court introduced new forms from Iran, they brought Western artistic ideas with them.
12. See, for example, Stanley 1996, no.31, a manuscript copied in 1809. 13. James 1800, p.214.
14. This man was recorded by Habib (1951, pp.269–72), but only as the brother of another illuminator called Ahmed Efsend, who also worked in the reign of Selim II.
15. Habib 1951, pp.179–80; Huwart 1958, p.2035; Inal 1959, p.413; Rodo, no date, p.216; Inal (1959, p.413) found reference to Halil Şükrü as calligrapher at the Mekke-i Mazref-i Adivie in Istanbul on 25 Dhu’l-Hijja 1267 (21 October 1850) and in AH 1263 (10 August 1847). See also Safwat 1996, no.31. 16. Safwat 1996, nos 21, 22 (see also nos 31, 32). No.21 is dated 1580 and was granted to Seyyid Mehmed Zühtü by his master, Seyyid Mehemmed Sali Şükrü. It was countersigned by Mehemmed Sali Şükrü’s own master, Seyyid Hafiz Ali Riza, who was a pupil of Seyyid Suleyman Veysi. No.22 was issued four years later by Mehemmed Zühtü to his pupil, Mehemmed Hamdi, whose hand, especially his thuluth, is very poor. Mehemmed Zühtü describes himself as ‘commonly called Khusba’, an epithet that Safwat thought meant ‘baker’ (Arabic khusba), but which is probably a translation of a Turkish name such as Ekmekçi, ‘from the place called Ekmekçi’ (literally, Baker), into Arabic to make it sound grander. Mehemmed Zühtü and Mehemmed Hamdi were both examiners of a licence issued to one Hafiz Ibrahim Şenlık in AH 1284 (AD 1867–8). See Christie’s, London, 4 August 1982, lot 49; Inal 1951, pp.25–28; Inal 2000; Deroche 2000, 49. Derman 1966. See Bayani, Contalini & Stanley 2000, nos 33, 34, 35.

The production in other centres of Istanbul in the vicinity to the Ottoman capital, should have played an important role. Towards the east of Istanbul that the area owned, at least in terms of number of signatures, all the names of the same master. This makes them similar (222–33 below). Since we therefore predate the 18th century and the development of the production in the capital, and that the Shumen type and the directions of patronage. As we have seen, the most important provincial city of contact with the capital, we suggest that most of the surviving examples there. As we have received the same in the classical Ottoman Baroque, it is unlikely that the Baroque style. Indeed, the Baroque was the last important
Single-volume Qur'an
Istanbul, Rajab 1239 (March 1824)

In the colophon on folio 308a, the scribe responsible for this Qur'an gives his name as Mustafa Izaz and states that he was a pupil of Mustafa al-Wasif. This description fits Kazasker Mustafa Izaz Efendi (d. AH 1289/AD 1872–3), whose master in the ṭukhār and naskh styles was Şeyh Mustafa Vasi Efendi (d. 1865), and there can be no doubt that this small but splendid manuscript is an early work of this man, who became one of the greatest Ottoman calligraphers of the 19th century.

Mustafa Izaz was born in the small town of Tosa in northern Anatolia in AH 1216 (AD 1802–3). His widowed mother sent him to be educated in Istanbul, where he came to the attention of Sultan Mahmud II on account of his fine voice. The sultan ordered that he be trained for service in the Enderun, the "inner precincts" of the Imperial Palace that was home to the ruler’s male retinue, including his musicians. For three years Mustafa was educated in the apartments of the sultan’s sword-bearer, Gazi Ahmed Paşa-zade Ali Bey, and then for three more years in the Galata Palace. By the time his education was completed, in AH 1235 (AD 1819–20), he was outstanding as a singer and as a flute-player.

The official chronicle of life in the Enderun recorded that at this point Mustafa’s patron, Ali Bey, sent news to the new sword-bearer, Ilyas Ağà, and asked whether it was proper for a master as accomplished as Mustafa to remain in the Galata Palace. Ilyas Ağà had Mustafa brought from Galata and took him to the Mabeyn-i Hâmayün, the apartments where the sultan received the male members of his household. There Mustafa performed an improvisation on the flute in the mode called Acmâsirân, and "with every note he caused those present to acknowledge his skill." One of the courtiers took the lead in praising Mustafa’s performance, and everyone concurred with his judgement. The sultan was urged to make the young man a court musician (gâvâş), and he instructed Ilyas Ağà to attach Mustafa to the section of the Enderun service known as the Kiler, or imperial pantry. There he was to wait upon the court musicians (gâvâş) until he was admitted to their number.

Cat. 50 was written four years later, in 1824, by which time Mustafa had attained the rank of court musician, since he described himself in the colophon as serbeng-i şehriyâri-i Kiler-i Hassa ("imperial serbeng in the Sultan’s Pantry"). The term serbeng had been used as the Persian equivalent for the Turkish şerîf since the Seljuk period. Both terms had originally meant "herald," but by the late-Ottoman period they had acquired the additional meaning of "court musician." Indeed, the heralds had always had a connection with a form of music, since one of their tasks was to make the acclamations required on certain state occasions in a sonorous and attractive manner.

Mustafa Izaz is said to have completed 11 copies of the Qur’an. This example, beautifully written in the ayet ber kenâr format (see pp. 188–91), has excellent illumination in an eclectic style. The surah headings are all of the same traditional type, in which a callouche with a gold ground is flanked by a rather rigid arrangement of rosettes in gold on gold, with the motifs set off by touches of red and blue. By contrast, the marginal devices denoting divisions of the text and the rijâd are charming Rococo inventions. There are two sconce-like forms, both rendered in gold and a variety of colours. The decoration of the opening pages is close in many respects to the traditional design, but the composition has been adapted to fit a new aesthetic, and the colouring is also new.

The most novel element is the frame that surrounds the text on each page on four sides, replacing the two vertical bands usually found on either side of the text. This frame contains a pattern of Rococo C-scrolls, with ribbed, shell-like motifs in each corner. The scrolls are in white with pink and gold highlights and are set on a pale-blue ground stippled with blue. The panels for the surah headings, placed above and below the text, are much more conservative in character; they are of the same type as those found elsewhere in the...
The Baroque and after

manuscript. This central block is surrounded by a pale-blue band set with a repeat pattern of pink and blue petals (or leaves) and small gold rosettes; and the whole composition is framed by a wide border, which is filled with gold-on-gold work that combines scrolls set with rosettes and large split-palmette motifs. The deep indentations between the lobes of this border are filled with smaller lobes that have gold rosettes on a pale-blue ground.

Folio 378b bears the text of the last two surahs, arranged between three illuminated bands and written as though filling a circle. The bands at the top and in the middle contain the surah titles, while the band at the base of the text area, which is of the same general type, contains a name, Seyyid Mehmed Hüsnü, which is presumably that of the illuminator. The scribe's colophon was written in black yapış in the centre of the facing page, folio 378a, and the text there fills an area shaped like an inverted teardrop. The empty spaces around the circular texts of the two surahs and the teardrop-shaped colophon are filled with a pattern of rotating gold scrolls.

The binding, of dark-brown morocco, is a late example of a classical Ottoman type. There are extensive recessed areas, which form a centre-and-corner composition and a wide border. All these elements were stamped with a pattern of floral scrolls in relief and gilted. There is also an outer border of cabling, also painted gold. The double fies and fly-leaves are of pinkish-red morocco painted in two tones of gold with multiple borders and the European-style composite motif that also appears on the outer covers of cat. 40.
Single-volume Qur'an

Probably Bursa, AH 1352 (AD 1836–7)

The scribe responsible for this Qur’an, Seyyid Süleyman Vehbi, was a shykh of the Ashrafī branch of the Qadiri dervish fraternity. He held the post of ‘supervisor’ (nīṣabah) of the Karābâş Veli Tekkesi in Bursa, where the manuscript was presumably written. The shykh is probably to be identified with the Süleyman Vehbi Efendi recorded by Mahmud Kemal İnâl on the basis of a hilye dated AH 1247 (AD 1831–2) in the Topkapı Palace Library. İnâl was unable to offer any further information on this man, but in the colophon of cat. 51 Süleyman Vehbi describes himself as a pupil of Hafiz İbrahim Şevkî, who was in turn a khalīfah (chosen successor) of Hafiz İsmail Zâhid the Second, calligrapher to the Imperial Palace (kâbusa-i sâratı ad-sultâni). Süleyman Vehbi describes his master as ‘al-Islambuli’ (‘of Istanbul’), a punning name for Istanbul, and this tends to confirm that the manuscript was produced in Bursa, since there would have been no point in using this nisab in Istanbul itself. It also suggests that Süleyman Vehbi was proud to have trained as a calligrapher in the capital.

Habib Efendi has an entry on İbrahim Şevkî. He describes him as a poet and man of letters who lived in Orâkçı Yokuşu in the Fatih quarter of Istanbul, where he held gatherings that ‘were the resort of those not hidebound by convention and with a gift for fine talk.’ Habib did not know the date of Şevkî’s death, but he had seen a work of his dated AH 1245 (AD 1829), while Şevkî’s earliest recorded work is a qâbût dated AH 1197 (AD 1782–3), published by Şevkî’s brother İbrahim. The author of the Mürüd-i khattâţinin, a work consulted by Mahmud Kemal when compiling his Söhn Hattatlar, suggested that İbrahim was a pupil of Deli Osman Efendi, but the calligrapher’s own colophon shows that he was in fact a pupil of Hafiz İsmail Zâhid the Second, as does the colophon of cat. 51.

Süleyman Vehbi had a number of pupils, most of whom remained in provincial obscurity in Bursa (see p. 212), but the most celebrated, Hafiz Seyyid Halîl Şükri Nalâşbedî of Bursa, later settled in Istanbul. Halil Şükri’s move to the capital, and his subsequent high standing, led to information on him appearing in the work of Habib, who recorded that he became calligrapher master at the İhrîniye school in Süleymaniye and died after the end of the Crimean War. Mahmud Kemal later found references to Halil Şükri as calligrapher master at the Mekteb-i Mâzarî-i Adleye in Istanbul on 23 Dhu’l-Hijja 1287 (17 October 1861) and in AH 1288 (AD 1872). This information on Süleyman Vehbi and his master and main pupil places him in the metropolitan tradition of Ottoman calligraphy, and his nisab hand is appropriately impressive. The illumination of the manuscript, on the other hand, does not relate to the style of decoration used for copies of the Qur’an produced in the capital, although it is still very fine.

The decoration of the opening pages of text contains all the traditional elements in terms of layout, with the exception of the circular text area, an unusual but not unprecedented feature. In terms of motifs, however, the traditional repertoire has been entirely replaced by Europeanizing elements. All the grounds within the design are in different tones of gold, as in contemporary Qur’an illumination produced in Istanbul. In addition, the margins are covered with gold, which shades from a yellow to a coppery tone and is overpainted with fragments of scrollwork in white. The rest of the colour scheme resembles that found in the stylistically mixed illumination of cat. 50.

The text area is surrounded by gold scrollwork outlined in red and four baskets of flowers, while the ‘tables’ on which the surah headings are written are framed by Rococo brackets, and the spaces on either side are filled with pink and blue scrollwork stippled gold grounds. Larger scrolls of the same type fill the border, where they support receptacles containing pink or yellow roses and other flowers and leaves. Where a greenish tone of
The Baroque and after

gold is used, it is textured with red dots, and the yellow gold is often pricked. The edge of the border is formed by a straight frame of stippled gold overlaid with pink and green scrolls, which is interrupted by small lobes that end in flower heads.

The surah headings, the varied verse markers and the marginal devices marking divisions of the text (buzh and jaz) and sajdah are in a mixture of traditional and Europeanizing elements rendered in a much wider range of colours, but the decoration around the colophon on folio 35b returns to the style of the opening pages. The circular text area is surrounded by pink scrolls on a stippled gold ground, and set with tiny green leaves.

The one surviving cover shows that the binding was of very high quality. The dark-brown morocco is lightly tooled and painted in two colours of gold with a composition of chains of flowers and large leaves. The gilt border is tooled with a laurel-wreath motif. The doublure and the two surviving flyleaves are of green morocco and are painted in gold with a diaper pattern framed by borders lightly tooled with a leaf motif and painted in silver and gold.
52
Single-volume Qur’an
Ottoman, AH 1274 (AD 1857–8)

The distinctive Empire-style illumination found in this manuscript is replicated in a good number of other Qur’an manuscripts from the mid-19th century, including one written by Hafiz Mehmed Rajid in AH 1265 (AD 1847–8). This Mehmed Rajid has been identified with the scribe of that name who was a pupil of the Istanbul calligrapher Kebeci-zade Mehmed Vash, and who died in AH 1292 (AD 1875). The evidence for this identification is weak, but if it is correct, it connects Qur’an manuscripts with this type of decoration with the capital. It is notable, however, that neither Husayn ibn Muhammad, the scribe of cat.52, nor those responsible for several other examples, such as Semseddin Rifki, who made a copy of the Qur’an in AH 1285 (AD 1866–7), and Hafiz Mehmed Ali, son of Hafiz Hasan, who copied another in AH 1303 (AD 1885–6), are mentioned in works on calligraphers active in Istanbul in the 19th century. Nor are places of production mentioned in the colophons. It is therefore not possible to attribute Qur’an manuscripts of this kind to a particular centre within the Ottoman empire.

The characteristic components that had bound Qur’an production since the beginning of the Ottoman period, at least in terms of the decorative surround for the text on the opening pages, folios 18–20. This element consisted of the group of vertical gold and coloured rules that had previously been placed along the inner edge of each page. Attached to them were the rules that framed the set of panels that contained the main text and the surah headings, and these have also been eliminated. Indeed, in a true Baroque spirit, all the straight lines have been eliminated from the opening illumination.

The new composition was simplified in its basic outline: the text, written within a roughly oval area in the middle of the page, is surrounded by a unified border. Yet the simplicity of the overall form is obscured by the complexity of the border in its detail. On each side of the text there are groups of acanthus scrolls painted in gold and white, with some areas of gold picked with a needle. Blue and white ribbons run between the scrolls, and bunches of roses and other flowers issue from them. In the centre of the scrolls at the top and bottom are matching pairs of gilt cartouches, clearly intended to accommodate the surah headings, but these have been written in white riq’a in the lower cartouches only.

Elsewhere in the manuscript, the decoration is as rich but more conventional: the text on each page is framed by a gold band set off with black and gold rules; the surah headings appear on gold cartouches within narrow horizontal bands; and marginal devices mark each bi‘ah, juz’ and sajadah; and a composition of leaf motifs on a gold ground surrounds the colophon on the lower part of folio 306b. Only in its details can this decoration be related to the Baroque style seen on the opening pages. A more elaborate, and more typically Baroque, composition occurs within the text frame on folio 301a, where a short text is surrounded by a combination of acanthus scrolls and two bunches of flowers. The wording here includes the information that cat.52 was the 13th copy of the Qur’an made by the scribe and ends with the date.6

The binding is of brown morocco. The main field is painted with a cross-cross pattern formed by bands of four gilt lines each, while the double borders are in two tones of gold and are lightly worked with a European-style palmette tool. The doublures and flyleaves are of red paper and are painted with gold frames.
The Baroque and after

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The Shumen phenomenon
by Tim Stanley

No fewer than eight of the 19th-century Ottoman Qur'an manuscripts in the Khalili Collection were copied in the city of Shumen in north-east Bulgaria, which was known in the Ottoman period as Şumen or Şumla.1 These holdings reflect Shumen's role as a leading provincial centre for the production of copies of the Qur'an for much of this period, both in terms of the number made there and their quality. This production is first testified in manuscripts of the 1820s, when a scribe called Mehmed Nureddin copied cat. 51. According to the available evidence, the output of Qur'an manuscripts continued on a relatively modest scale for most of the 1830s and then increased sharply. The rise in output had certainly occurred by the 1840s, when cat. 34 and 35 were copied in the city, and production at something like the same level was maintained through the 1850s and the 1860s, when cat. 56–9 were written.2 In the 1870s the production of Qur'an manuscripts declined rapidly in Shumen, as elsewhere, because of the introduction of mechanical reproduction using lithography.

A bulwark of Islam

The city of Shumen occupies a natural stronghold halfway between Ruse on the Danube and Varna on the Black Sea coast, and it had often been a crucial position for the defence of the Balkans from invasion from the north-east. The expansion of the Russian empire under Peter the Great (reg. 1682–1725) and his successors meant that the site regained its importance, and the fortifications at Shumen were enlarged several times during the 18th and 19th centuries, when it formed part of a defensive quadrilateral with Ruse, Varna and Silistra. The city had a large Turkish population, and in the same period it acquired numerous Muslim religious and cultural institutions, including those founded by Şerif Halîl Paşa, an important government official of local origin, in 1744.3 The fortress successfully resisted Russian attacks in 1774, 1810 and 1828, but it was again attacked during the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–8 and was forced to capitulate. From this moment, Shumen's role as a bulwark of Islam ceased.

The Congress of Berlin in 1878 made Shumen part of the new Bulgarian state, whose large Turkish population was left politically weakened by the emigration of the rich and educated. The Turks of Bulgaria were repeatedly subject to oppressive measures designed to annihilate their cultural heritage and their institutions, and even to deny their personal ethnic and religious identity; only with the fall of the Zhivkov regime in 1989 did this oppression cease. In these circumstances, local knowledge of the production of Qur'an manuscripts in Shumen was lost, so that, although it flourished in relatively recent times, its history has had to be recovered from external sources. As we shall see, these appear to have included oral sources in Turkey, but more evidence by far has been provided by the manuscripts themselves. Because the copies of the Qur'an produced in Shumen were made primarily for export to other parts of the Ottoman empire, they have survived outside Bulgaria. So, too, have at least three calligrapher's licences issued in the town in the 1860s, which the scribes who emigrated in the late 1870s presumably took away with them.4

The documentation found in the Shumen manuscripts — mostly in the form of the scribes' colophons — can be supplemented by stylistic evidence, especially that arising from the distinctive type of illumination employed during the heyday of production. The colophons generally give the name of the scribe and of the man who trained him. In a few cases, the place of production is stated, or the scribe describes himself as resident in Shumen. In other instances, the scribe's name includes the nisbah al-Shumani ("of Shumen"). Where one scribe mentions Shumen explicitly in a colophon, and another does not but can be linked to the first scribe in some way (for example, he is his pupil, or he has the same teacher), it is usually possible to confirm that the second scribe worked in Shumen on the basis of the Shumen-style illumination in the manuscript or manuscripts he produced. Indeed, it is also possible to identify a copy of the Qur'an as being from Shumen purely on the basis of its illumination.

The calligrapher's licences issued in the city are important because of their unusual format. Most Ottoman licences consist of a specimen of the scribe's calligraphic skill, with the approval of the examinee's master or masters written beneath. In Shumen, however, licences were countersigned by
The Khalili Collection

The Ottomans became the dominant power in the Balkans from the mid-15th century, and Varna, on the coast of the Black Sea, became a major trading hub. The city was captured by the Ottomans in 1444, and it remained under their control for over 250 years. The city was rebuilt and expanded, and it became a center for the production of manuscripts and other works of art.

The city was also famous for its calligraphy, which was used on illuminated manuscripts. The city was known for its calligraphers, who were highly skilled and respected. The city was also famous for its printed books, which were produced in a variety of fonts and styles.

Varna was an important center for the production of manuscripts, and it was home to a number of famous calligraphers. The city was also known for its illuminated manuscripts, which were highly sought after by collectors and institutions around the world.

The city was also famous for its print shops, which were used to produce a variety of printed books. The print shops were located in a number of different areas of the city, and they were known for their high-quality products. The print shops were also famous for their use of skilled craftsmen, who were able to produce a wide range of products, from books to maps to textiles.

The city was also famous for its schools, which were used to train students in a variety of subjects, including calligraphy. The schools were located in a number of different areas of the city, and they were known for their high-quality education. The schools were also famous for their use of skilled teachers, who were able to provide a high-quality education to their students.
Mahmud’s patronage of a religious institution in Shumen dates from the very end of his reign, when, in AM 1234 (AD 1858–9), he had the madrasah attached to the Eski Cami (‘Old Mosque’) repaired.16 Mahmud’s intervention in Shumen’s religious life on this occasion can be matched to evidence that a large increase in Qur’an production occurred there towards the end of the 1850s. These events were presumably connected.

Unver also admitted that he could find no record of the teaching activities of Hafiz Ibrahim Şevki (fl. 1792–1829) in Shumen in the 1830s. As we have seen (cat. 51), this Şevki Efendi received his training in Istanbul from the famous Ismail Zühdî (d. 1826), who held a position at the Imperial Palace, and Habib Efendi recorded him as living in Ortuşlı Yokuşu in the Fatih quarter of the city. Habib did not know when Ibrahim Şevki died, which may have been because the calligrapher had moved away from the capital and settled in Shumen (or Silistra, where he is also supposed to have worked). Yet not a single Shumen scribe mentions in his colophon that he was a pupil of this master. Unver’s conviction that Ibrahim Şevki worked in Shumen led him to presume that Şevki’s pupil Süleyman Vebi and Vebi’s own pupils also worked there. He therefore included two of the latter in his list of Shumen scribes.17 Yet, as cat. 51 shows, in 1856–7 Süleyman Vebi was resident in Bursa, not Shumen.

One even detects a tendency on Unver’s part to attribute all 19th-century provincial Qur’ans of reasonable quality to Shumen. He included two pupils of Terlikçi–zade Mehmed Said Tabi‘i in his list of Shumen scribes, for example.18 For Ugur Derman, however, Mehmed Said, who died in 1843, was one of the leading calligraphers of Edirne, where he trained a large number of pupils.19 Similarly, Salih Nalli, another scribe on his list, had no connection with Shumen: he was born in Manastır (now Bitola in Macedonia), trained as a calligrapher and poet in Istanbul and then moved to Cairo, where he died in 1876.20

The view from Istanbul

Unver was unable to produce any evidence that Shumen was a major centre for the production of manuscripts of the Qur’an before the reign of Mahmud II because, it seems, there was no evidence to find.21 Certainly, the biographical sources on Ottoman scribes active in the 18th and 19th centuries contain very few references to scribes who were born or worked in Shumen. The main source for the 18th century, the Taḥfa‘-i khaṣṣa‘tín of Mūṣṭakim-zade Süleyman Sa‘īd Efendi, includes an entry on Şerif Halil Pasha.22 He was a native of Shumen, and, as has already been mentioned, he played an important role there as a benefactor, but he spent his working life in government service outside the city, not as a Shumen Qur’an scribe. Two other entries relate to brothers called Seyyid Hüseyin and Seyyid Mustafa, natives of Shumen who studied with Eğrkapılı Mehmed Rasim Efendi in Istanbul before returning to their home town.23 Since Mehmed Rasim died in AM 1169 (AD 1755–6), it is possible that one of the brothers held the post of calligraphy tutor in Şerif Halil Pasha’s foundation in Shumen, created in 1744.

The calligraphers of Shumen remained almost entirely outside the orbit of later Istanbul-based writers on the subject such as Habib and İbnülemîn Mahmud Kemal (Mahmud Kemal İnal). In İnal we find an Ömer Râşîl of Shumen, but he taught at a school in Istanbul.24 There is also a brief entry on Ahmed Şevki, one of the scribes listed by Unver.25 İnal based his entry on a notice in the unpublished Merâ‘-i khaṣṣa‘tín of Süleyman Efendi (d. 1924). Ahmed Şevki Efendi was one of the more famous Shumen calligraphers. He was called Topçu. He was an imitator of Ismail Zühdî. By command of Sultan Mahmud II he came to Istanbul and died there.26 Shumen appears here as a centre where many calligraphers lived, if mostly in obscurity, at least from a metropolitan point of view. This obscurity did not, though, prevent at least one scribe from the city being the object of imperial patronage in the reign of Mahmud II. On the other hand, Ahmed Şevki’s training in Shumen may not have been sufficient to earn him his particular eminence, since he is described as a muqallid (‘imitator’) of Ismail Zühdî, presumably the celebrated Istanbul calligrapher who taught Hafiz Ibrahim Şevki.27
The Shumen phenomenon

§3
Single-volume Qur'an
Shumen, AH 1245 (AD 1827–8)

24 folios, 15 x 10.2 cm.,
with 15 lines to the page
Material A smooth, light-brown
laid paper, burnished, with
approximately nine laid lines to the
centimetre, and no apparent
rib shadows on chain lines.
Mend
markings are difficult to identify,
owing to the highly fibrous nature
of the pulp.
Text area 9.7 x 7.1 cm.
Script Main text and marginal
notes in naskhi, with rubrifications;
other marginalia in gold ragīd.
Scribe Salt-Sayyid Muhammad
Nur al-Dīn
Illumination Extensive decoration
on folios 1b–24; text frames ruled
in two tones of gold and black; verse
markers in a variety of forms, in
contrasting tones of gold, with black
outlines and prickings; unfinished
surah headings; marginal ornaments
marking divisions of the text and
saddles; decoration around colophons;
on folio 24v, edges of the text
block decorated in two tones of
gold with a zigzag leaf design filled
with flowers
Documentation A colophon
Binding Contemporary, with flap
Accession no. QUR.25

For the production of manuscripts, there was no
cultural tradition in the 18th and
19th centuries in Shumen. The
Suleyman Selʿeddīn
and, as has already
been pointed out, the
many other entries relating to
him died with Egirikapılı
Muḥammad Rasmī
of calligraphy tutor
Kemal Inal). In Inal
There is also a brief
testimony on a notice in the
Kemal Inal was one of the
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being the object of
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scribed as a muqaddas
who taught Hafiz
An even shorter entry on the same page relates to Mehmed Şükri Efendi, who 'was licensed by Evliya-zade Haci Ahmed Nazif Efendi. Two Qur'ans by him [have been noted, both] dated 1276 [AD 1859–60]'. A third, slightly earlier Qur'an manuscript by this calligrapher has now been published, and in the colophon the scribe gives the name of his master as Evliya-zade Ahmed Nazif and the place and date of completion as Shumen, AH 1277 [AD 1853–4]. From this it is clear that Mehmed Şükri worked in Shumen. It is also likely that he was trained there, since his master, Ahmed Nazif, taught many other students who produced Qur'ans decorated in the Shumen style.

Seyyid Mehmed Nuri

Ahmed Nazif was one of three Shumen scribes of the mid-19th century who trained a large number of pupils, as evidenced by the frequency with which their names appear in the colophons of those they taught. The second was Ahmed Zarefi, who had been a pupil of the Ahmed Şükri mentioned above. The third was Seyyid Mehmed Nuri, who was the scribe responsible for cat.54.27 His circle of pupils included two who produced Qur'an manuscripts now in the Khalili Collection, namely, Salih Rami, who copied cat.56 and 57, and Hüseyin Hüsnü, who wrote cat.58. The colophon of cat.54 provides much of the information available on Mehmed Nuri. It reads: 'This copy of the Qur'an was written by the slave who prays for the Exalted Ottoman State, the weakest of scribes, known as Seyyid Mehmed Nuri, a pupil of Hüseyin Vehbi (May his Omnipotent Lord pardon him!), a resident of Shumen, in the year 1266 since the migration of him who possessed glory and honour,' that is, in AD 1849–50.

The wording of this colophon is strikingly similar to that of cat.53, which reads: 'This copy of the Qur'an was written by the slave who prays for the Exalted Ottoman State, the weakest of scribes, known as Seyyid Mehmed Nureddin, a pupil of Hüseyin Vehbi (May his Omnipotent Lord pardon him!), a resident of Shumen and a follower of Abu Hanifah in law and of al-Maturidi in theology, in the year 1243 since the Hegira [AD 1827–8].' It is tempting to conclude that the Nureddin used here is an earlier form of Mehmed Nuri's second name. Evidence against this conclusion comes in the form of a report of a Qur'an manuscript signed by Mehmed Nuri that was copied a year earlier, in AH 1242 [AD 1826–7].28 The stylistic evidence provides little help in settling the issue. The hands of the Qur'an manuscripts by Mehmed Nureddin and Mehmed Nuri in the Khalili Collection are very similar in many respects, but this proves nothing, since they were both working within a scribal tradition in which individual mannerisms were frowned upon. Two good pupils of the same master might well have produced work that is so closely related; but, at the same time, the hand of a single calligrapher might have shown this modest degree of variation over the 20 years and more that separates the two examples available for comparison.

The earliest date at which Mehmed Nuri is known to have been active is therefore 1826, and he seems to have remained active for at least three decades, and perhaps as many as five decades, after this. The library of Topkapı Palace and public and private collections around the world contain more than a dozen other copies of the Qur'an signed by 'Seyyid Mehmed Nuri, a pupil of Hüseyin Vehbi',29 and the latest of these is dated AH 1274 [AD 1857–8]. Further, a scribe called Mehmed Nuri added supplementary inscriptions to two calligrapher's diplomas issued in Shumen in AH 1277 [AD 1860–61] and AH 1282 [AD 1866–6] respectively;30 and it seems highly likely that he was the same person. It is therefore not unimaginable that two Qur'an manuscripts dated AH 1279 [AD 1862–3] and AH 1286 [AD 1869–70] and signed simply as Mehmed Nuri are also the work of the 'pupil of Hüseyin Vehbi'.31 An optimistic interpretation of this information is that Mehmed Nuri was active between 1826 and 1870.

The number of Qur'an manuscripts by this scribe that were deposited in the Topkapı Palace is impressive. Five were recorded by F.E. Karatay in his catalogue of the Museum's Arabic manuscripts; two were from the Emanet Hazinesi (the treasury of holy relics), one was from the collection associated with the most important relic, the Hırka-i Şadet (the cloak of the Prophet), and two were in the Medrac collection. Even the eminent calligrapher Ismail Zühdü (the man who taught İbrahim Şevki and
whom Ahmed Işık'i 'imitated') was responsible for only three copies of the Qurʾan in the Topkapı collections, which can be explained in part by the fact that his work is represented by many non-Qurʾanic manuscripts. But no other calligrapher was responsible for more than two copies of the Qurʾan. This must indicate a certain eminence on Mehmed Nuri’s part in the context of contemporaneous Ottoman production of Qurʾan manuscripts, and it suggests that he received the patronage of the sultan or other leading figures at court over several decades. Yet he was unknown to the likes of Habib and Inal, whose works provide information almost exclusively on calligraphers resident in the capital. We can conclude from this that Mehmed Nuri spent his life in Shumen, as the phrase al-Shumenevi maskanan (‘resident in Shumen’), which he included in many of his colophons, would seem to indicate.

**Shumen illumination**

Most Qurʾan manuscripts produced by Mehmed Nuri and other Shumen scribes were decorated with illumination of a type that occurs only on manuscript material from this city, and which therefore may be classed as the Shumen style. The most striking feature of this style is its blend of Ottoman Baroque elements of Western European origin (see pp.208–13 above) with others drawn from the traditional repertory of Ottoman Qurʾan illumination. The overall layout of the opening pages is of a traditional type, but it is filled with a well-modulated combination of modified Ottoman and novel European motifs. A second notable feature is the wide range of colours employed: white, pink, pale blue, purple, orange and green are far more prominent than in traditional Qurʾan illumination, in which gold and blue grounds played a dominant role (see pp.166, 188 above). Large areas of gold ground were also used in the Shumen style, and on the opening pages of text the outer margins are often covered with gold or silver and burnished to enhance their brilliance.

Although Shumen illumination of the middle-19th century shares these characteristics, it is not homogenous, and the extent of the variation suggests that individual illuminators or workshops developed their own sub-styles. In addition, there is clearly development over time. In cat.53, which is the earliest of the Khalili Shumen manuscripts, having been copied by Seyyid Mehmed Nureddin in AH 1243 (AD 1827–8), the opening pages have illumination of an entirely conventional kind, with none of the Europeanizing exotica seen in later work. The only hint of what was to come is found on the last page of text, where a Baroque frame of multiple curves and angles surrounds the colophon. Here too, though, the remainder of the illumination is in the same conventional style as that at the beginning of the manuscript. By the late 1850s, however, the eclectic Shumen style had come into being.

Cat.54 has six double-page illuminations in place of the usual one or two, and this decoration is of excellent quality, both in terms of its execution and in the originality and vigour of its design. Indeed, it marks a highpoint in the development of the distinctive Shumen style. The ornament on the opening pages incorporates a number of novel elements, such as the frame of Rococo scrolls around the text and the bands of decoration that run parallel to the spine. It is also in the broad range of colours typical of Shumen work, with considerable use of pink and pale blue. It is worth noting, though, that one of the more unusual motifs employed here – the pink cloud scrolls that supplement the gold palmette scrolls – was not derived from European models. The motif is found intermittently in Ottoman Qurʾan illumination of earlier periods, but it is more characteristic of earlier non-Ottoman illumination, especially that produced in 16th-century Shiraz. The overall effect is livelier than that of the traditional composition seen in the Qurʾan of 1827–8, and the innovations are well handled, so the juxtaposition of motifs from different sources is not incongruous.

The five other double-page illuminations in the manuscript of 1849–50 are not bound by tradition to anything like the same extent. The first four mark the beginning of surahs used as prayers (Yaʾṣīm on folios 226b–227a, al-Fāṭīb on folios 256b–257a, al-Malik on folios 281b–282a and al-Nabāʾ on folios
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293b–294a), while the fifth surrounds the end of the text on folio 307b and the colophon on folio 328a. Each has an elaborate ornamental frame enclosing two text areas of normal size, but in every case the composition is very different. One (folios 281b–282a) is very close to the traditional design seen on the opening folios, and the last retains many of these features but is interrupted in the middle of each side by a Baroque 'establature' of a type found in the illuminated head-pieces of non-Qur'anic manuscripts at an earlier date. In the others, though, only traces of the classical models remain, and most of the traditional motifs have been swept away, to be replaced by baskets of flowers and in one case even plates of fruit.

In terms of the quality of its illumination, this Qur'an more than matches metropolitan production of the period, and in the context of Ottoman provincial Qur'ans it is outstanding. Most of the elements found in Shumen illumination are present in its decoration, although the traditional component has not been transformed so radically as it is in later examples, at least in terms of the illumination of the opening pages. The work of this later period is, though, rarely of the same exceptional standard. It tends to be more schematic in execution, and the colours are less gently modulated. Yet it still surpasses the illumination found in most other provincial Qur'ans of the 19th century.

Shumen and the standardized Qur'ān

Although the Qur'āns produced in Shumen between the late 1830s and the 1870s are notable for their distinctive style of illumination, in most other respects, including the styles of binding and calligraphy employed, they can be seen as part of the wider Ottoman tradition, which followed models developed in Istanbul. Three examples of the bindings on dated Shumen manuscripts from this period have recently been published in the catalogue of the collection of Ghassan I. Shaker, and these, together with the six specimens from the same period in the Khalili Collection (cat.54–9 below), provide enough evidence to draw some preliminary conclusions. All nine books are bound in covers of brown morocco that are ornamented with light tooling and painting in gold; this technique had become the normal method of decorating bindings in Istanbul by the beginning of the 19th century. The most common design is a painted diaper pattern with a tooled gold dot or a group of tooled gold dots at the centre of each cell: there seems to be a correlation between the number of dots and the overall quality of the bindings, which varies considerably. This design fills the whole field on seven of the bindings (the three Shaker manuscripts and cat.55–7 and 59) and the reduced field at the centre of the covers of cat.54. It is also to be found on the binding of cat.53, Mehmed Nureddin’s copy of the Qur'ān of 1241 (AD 1827–8). It may therefore be taken as characteristic of Shumen manuscript production, although it was never exclusive to this school.

The calligraphy of copies of the Qur'ān made in Shumen follows the same pattern of variation as the bindings: the quality of execution varies, but the model aspired to remains constant. In this case, the model was supplied by Istanbul calligraphers of the 18th century, such as the two mentioned above, Eğrikapı Mehmed Rasim and Isma'il Zühidi. These masters were heirs to the revival in Ottoman naskh calligraphy in the second half of the 17th century, which had bequeathed them the regular, well-proportioned naskh hand in which the main text was copied. The naskh hand had originally been only one of a series of calligraphic modes employed for the Qur'ānic text, and was designed to present it in an unambiguous a manner as possible. From the 17th century, however, naskh was the only mode employed in Ottoman Qur'ān manuscripts. This narrowing of the available options was not restricted to the type of script employed, and it is inevitable that the performance of the 19th-century scribes who worked in Shumen was strongly influenced by the remarkably standardized format of the Qur'āns they produced. The nature of this standardization can be judged from the six copies made in Shumen in the period 1845–70 that are preserved in the Khalili Collection (cat.54–9 below). The six manuscripts belong to the sub-group of Ottoman copies of the Qur'ān known as ayer bey kenār (see pp.188–91 above), and it is clear that other published examples also fall within this
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sub-group. In these manuscripts there are always 15 lines of text to the page, and the text was composed so that the end of the page coincides with the end of a verse. At the same time, the number of folios in a manuscript was always between 300 and 310, reflecting the conventional division of the Qur'anic text into 30 fascicles or ajza, which were realized as gatherings of 10 folios. The dimensions of the folios and the proportion of each page occupied by the ruled text area were also fairly standard, as the following table shows:

| cat. 44 | 304 folios | 17.1 × 11.7 cm | 5.1 × 5.1 cm |
| cat. 45 | 310 folios | 16.2 × 10.3 cm | 10.2 × 4.5 cm |
| cat. 46 | 308 folios | 14.5 × 10 cm  | 1.4 × 4.5 cm  |
| cat. 47 | 307 folios | 14.4 × 10 cm  | 1.4 × 4.3 cm  |
| cat. 48 | 305 folios | 16 × 9.7 cm  | 10.3 × 5.3 cm |
| cat. 49 | 306 folios | 18.9 × 12.3 cm | 12.2 × 6.3 cm |

Ayet ber kenür copies of the Qur'an were produced in considerable numbers over the course of the 18th and early 19th centuries, and their quality was usually quite modest, indicating that they were intended for private use by Muslims of comfortable means rather than the very rich. Nevertheless, some Shumen Qur'ans manuscripts, such as cat. 54, were of a very high standard. These examples seem to mark a change in the status of the ayet ber kenür format, which may have been due to contacts between the court in Istanbul and the calligraphers of this provincial town.

The parameters imposed by the 15-line, ayet ber kenür format, the modest size of the manuscripts themselves and the relatively small proportion of the page occupied by the text had the inevitable result that the script was written very small. Despite this, the Shumen scribes maintained a remarkable degree of legibility, and their skill can also be judged by the consistency they were able to maintain while copying more than 600 pages of text. This consistency has several aspects. It is seen in the size of script, which should be the same throughout a manuscript; in the regularity of the letter forms, which should be the same in any example of a scribe's hand; and in the system of proportions that connects the two, regulating the scaling of the letter forms within a text of a particular overall size. Despite the strict parameters established by their model, variations do occur between the hands of Shumen scribes. These are, though, the result of different levels of performance, which arise either from personal factors, such as the quality of a scribe's training or his degree of experience, or from external pressures, such as the time allocated for the task. The best hands show themselves in the restraint and discipline of the scribe, who tied the text strictly to a regular series of horizontal base-lines and eschewed all flourishes that gave unwarranted emphasis to particular letters or groups of letters.

Loyal subjects of the sultan

It is clear from the evidence collected so far that an extraordinary boom in Qur'an production took place in the city of Shumen in the mid-19th century. Despite the very small proportion of 19th-century Qur'ans that have been published, it has been possible to identify scores of copies produced there. The city itself, with its considerable Muslim population and its relatively high level of literacy and learning, would have generated some demand for such manuscripts. But the level of output clearly outstripped local demand, and, as Unver proposed, Shumen must have served a clientele elsewhere in the Ottoman empire, with Istanbul acting as the distribution centre for its Qur'an production. The capital may also have provided official patronage for Shumen's Qur'an scribes. Unver's claim that Mahmud II was responsible for a radical improvement in Shumen's scribal production has not been substantiated in detail, but an interest in the scribes of Shumen on the
54
Single-volume Qur'an
Shumen, AH 1266 (AD 1849–50)

308 folios, 12.1 x 11.7 cm,
with 35 lines to the page
Material: Polished, deep-cream,
fine wave paper
Text area 9.4 x 5.1 cm
Script: Main text in naskh, with
reading marks in red; surah
headings and inscriptions in
marginal ornaments in white riqa’
Scribe: Al-Sayyid Muhammad Nuri
Illumination: Extensive decoration
on folios 38–44, 220b–221a, 256b–257a, 293b–294a, 307b–308a;
text frames ruled in two tones of
gold, black, red and blue; verse
markers in a great variety of forms,
in colours and gold, the latter set
off by prickings; surah headings;
marginal ornaments marking
divisions of the text and sujudah
Documentation: A colophon
Binding: Contemporary, with flap
Accession no.: Q128,443
Published: Sotheby’s, London,
21 April 1988, lot 125; Geneva 1995,
loc.41
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54 folios 307b-308a

54 binding
part of the Ottoman court is also signalled by the report, going back to the Mir'at-i khatâtîn of Suleyman Efendi, that Topçu Ahmed Şikri was invited to the capital by Mahmud II. It is supported, too, by the presence in the former imperial libraries of three or four copies of the Qur'an written by Mehmed Nuri, the pupil of Hüseyn Velbi, in the reign of this sultan, and one each from the reigns of Mahmud's two successors. In addition, Sultan Abdülmecid II (reg. 1876–1909) gave as presents two sumptuously illuminated Qur'ans written by the Shumen scribe Abdurrahman Hilmi. The first, dated AH 1128 (AD 1815–6), was presented to 'Ali Rif'at Pasha on his accession as Khedive of Egypt in AH 1132 (AD 1820–1). The second, dated AH 1129 (AD 1817–18), was given to Ali Husayn, Sherif of Mecca, and remained in his family until they were overthrown as kings of Iraq in 1958. The interest shown by the court in Shumen production was reciprocated by the allegiance of at least some of the city's scribes showed to the Ottoman state. In his colophons Mehmed Nuri described himself as al-'abid al-da'î l-lil-dastılah al-'alîyyah al-'utbmunâyyah (the slave who prays for the Exalted Ottoman State). In isolation, the phrase can be seen as merely conventional, but the coincidence between its use in this colophon and the presence in the former imperial libraries of so many copies of the Qur'an by the scribe in question suggests that Mehmed Nuri's use of the phrase was an acknowledgement of the court patronage he had received. Indeed, since Mahmud II is renowned for his aggressive centralization of power, and Ottoman loyalty was hardly a matter of mere convention in his reign, Mehmed Nuri's use of the phrase may even have been a declaration of loyalty to the new political order associated with Mahmud's programme of centralizing reforms. This interpretation of the wording of colophons is supported by the character of the Shumen style of illumination. Its successful synthesis of traditional and novel Baroque elements can be seen as an artistic expression of Ottoman imperial policy under Mahmud and his sons Abdülmecid and Abdülaziz, which was designed to restore Ottoman power by employing new military and governmental techniques imported from Europe. It cannot be a coincidence that the Ottoman Baroque elements in Shumen illumination are also found on manuscripts linked personally to Sultan Mahmud, such as his own endowment deeds of naqdi, as well as on imperial decrees issued in his name. What marks out the Shumen work as provincial is that the Qur'an manuscripts produced there do not evince the shift to the new Empire style that had already occurred in the latter half of Mahmud's reign.

1. On Shumen, see Ivanova 1996. She reported that the calligraphers Hafiz Ibrâhim, Hüsseyin Vâsâfi, Seyyid Ahmed Nazifî, and the calligraphers of the Ertuğrul family (8th–9th centuries) were all born in Shumen. On Hüsseyin Vâsâfî and Ahmed Nazifî, see below. I have not been able to identify Hafiz Ibrâhim or the Ertuğrul family.
5. A similar type of licence was issued in Edirne, but the layout and style of illumination are different; see p.272 above.
6. Cf. the emergence of Patras as a centre for training calligraphers after its reconquest from the Venetians in 1715; Stanley 2000, p.48.
7. Ünver 1984, My thanks to Orhan Sabes for bringing this article to my attention after the publication of Stanley 2001.
10. Ünver 1984, pp.33–4. There are two entries on Hasan Aşıkî, in the 30 entries refer to 30 scribes.
11. As we shall see, the standard sûret heyken or 'fascicules' of ten leaves each.
12. Ünver 1984, p.35.
13. One (Topkapı Palace Library, X11113) was written by Mehmed Nureddîn in AH 1124/AD 1815–6; see Keskülah 1964, no.3710. The other was copied by Hasan Aşıkî in AH 1145/AD 1828–9; Ünver 1984, figs 2–4. Ünver also refers to a copy made by Mehmed Ali Ulu' in the 1146/AD 1829–30 and another copied by Hafiz Osman Rajid, a pupil of Suleyman Velbi, in AH 1146/AD 1829–30, but, as we shall see, it is not likely that either worked in Shumen.
15. They were Hafiz Osman Rajid, who copied a Qur’an dated AH 1146/AD 1829–30, and Ismail Şevki, who copied a Qur’an dated AH 1146/AD 1829.
16. They were Hafiz Hüsseyin Hilmi, who made his thirteenth copy of the Qur’an in AH 1176/AD 1859–60, and Hafiz Mustafa Şevki, who copied two Qur’ans dated AH 1182/AD 1865 and AH 1175/AD 1858–9 and a copy of the Asra’în ‘with Shumen illumination’. Of the latter,
The Shumen phenomenon

Unver also recorded that: 'For a time he moved to Istanbul, where he received enlightenment from Kâzım Murat's kütük Efendi.' 17 Derman 1969, p.216. This is corroborated by Karimzadeh 1999, no.21, a calligrapher's licence issued by Mehmed Süer to a pupil called Nazım Şükrü in AH 1248 (AD 1832-3); the licence is typical of Edirne rather than Shumen production in terms of both its layout and decoration. 21 Inal 1991, pp.235-8; also Safvat 2000, no.67.
21. Müstikun-zade, ed. Mehmed Kemal, pp.181, 377. We owe this information on the two brothers to the fact that Müstikun-zade also studied calligraphy with Mehmed Rasim and was careful to record other pupils of his revered master.
24. Inal 1991, p.410. If this information is reliable, it suggests that Ahmed Şükrü's Qur'an manuscript of 1856-7 was written in Istanbul rather than Shumen, since Mahmut 11 died in 1859.
25. Halil 1905, p.65; Inal 1991, pp.472-6. In this context the term 'imitator' is by no means pejorative. Copying the work of a great predecessor – a process known as naqš or tağlş – was an important means by which Ottoman calligraphers improved their own style, especially when they had exhausted the benefits to be derived from instruction by their contemporaries (see Bayuni, Contadini & Stanley 1999, p.68).
26. Safvat 2000, no.64.
29. To the list of ten published at Stanley 2000, pp.489-90, can be added the four noted in Unver 1984 (p.33) and one in Istanbul University Library (MS.A.6135: Karatay 1951, no.199).
32. The first is Topkâpâ Palace Library, MS.M.610; see Karatay 1962, no.1566. The second is Sotheby's, London, 17 October 1973, lot 315.
34. We cannot be sure of the totals given here, since Sultan Abdülmehmet II (reg.1856-1909) removed many manuscripts from the Topkâpâ Palace to his new palace of Yıldız, from where they were later transferred to Istanbul University Library. Others may have been given away.
35. Stanley 2000, pp.491-6. 36. See, for example, Unver 1984, figs 3, 3.
37. See, for example, Stanley 1986, no.33, which is dated 1899. 38. Not all the works of Mehmed Nuri were illuminated in the same lavish manner as cat.54. For example, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, MS.I.158 (Arberry 1967, no.221), which he copied nine years earlier, in AH 1251 (AD 1835-6), has far more modest decoration. By contrast, Topkâpâ Palace Library, MS.M.I.315, which he copied four years after cat.54 is reported to have illumination on folios 2b-2a, 22b-21a, 25b-27a and 30a, indicating a series of double-page compositions similar to that in the Khalîli manuscript, but this work is described as 'exquisite illuminated panels in yellow and green tones of gold', and it may be that the decoration in question is in the metropolitan gold-on-gold style; see Karatay 1962, no.1477.
40. Safvat 2000, nos 63, 64, 66.
41. The doublures are all of paper. The Khalîli doublures are either plain coloured paper (cat.56-8), marbled paper (cat.59), or coloured paper with painted designs (cat.63, 54) or a tooled and gilt-edged border (cat.55). For descriptions of the Slanker doublures, see Safvat 2000, pp.447, 441, 416.
43. The 'rip* hand used for the surah headings was probably the preserve of the illuminator, who seems in most cases to have been a different person. This 'rip* comes close to losing its identity: it is merely a form of naqš with a decorating number of the unusual ligatures that distinguish this style of script.
44. See Safvat 2000, nos 64-5, 66, for example.
45. Some Shumen Qur'an manuscripts are of the type in which groups of letters in the same position on opposite pages are picked out in red (see pp.190-2 above). For examples, see Safvat 2000, nos 64, 66, Deröché 2002.
46. Evans 1996.
50. Nadir 1986, nos.62, for example.
Single-volume Qur’an
Perhaps Shumen, AH 1246 (AD 1830–41)

The scribe, Seyyid Abdurrahman Tevfik, was a pupil of Eviya-zade Ahmed Nazif, who had also "received tuition" from Hace-i Laz Ömer el-Visi at the Threshold. Ahmed Nazifi was the teacher of at least nine Qur’an scribes who were active in Shumen in the 1840s and 1850s, and it is presumed that he was resident in this provincial city when he taught them (see p.226). Ömer Vasi, on the other hand, lived 'at the Threshold [al-Asiïnâbî]’, a location that refers to Istanbul as the residence of the sultan and therefore as the capital. Abdurrahman Tevfik’s connection with the Ottoman capital is restated in another phrase in the colophon, kâma taşhîfî fi buldâatin tayyibâtin wa-taşhîfi fi halimâtin, tayyibâtîn (‘my education took place in a Good City, and my exertions have been spent on a Good Word’). The Arabic phrase buldâatin tayyibâtin (‘a Good City’) is a well-known chronogram for the conquest of Istanbul in AH 857 (AD 1453), while the Good Word is, of course, the Qur’an.

Ömer Vasi, better known as Laz Ömer Efendi (see cat. 44), became a calligraphy tutor at the Imperial Palace and died in AH 1240 (AD 1834–5). This places Abdurrahman Tevfik’s training in Istanbul in the early 1820s at the latest. The two other copies of the Qur’an by Abdurrahman Tevfik that have been published are dated AH 1258 (AD 1842–3) and AH 1263 (AD 1846–7), and there is therefore no evidence of his activity as a scribe until the production of cat. 53 in 1840–41. By this time he seems to have returned to Shumen, to judge by the illumination of this manuscript, which is not in the full Shumen style but is closer to it than to any other contemporary style. Like other Qur’an manuscripts from Shumen, the text of cat. 53 was presented in the ayet ber kenar format, but Abdurrahman Tevfik does not seem to have been well practised in it, since, in order to leave a set of complete verses on each page, he often left gaps at the end of the text. Perhaps this indicates that he had adopted this format only recently — and that he had only recently moved back to Shumen. Otherwise, his hand is of very reasonable quality, as one would expect in view of his connection with a court calligrapher in Istanbul.

On folios 1b–2a, a sumptuous effect has been achieved by gilding the margins around the illuminated composition at the centre. The layout of this composition is thoroughly traditional, and the motifs employed are of standard types, but they are sometimes rendered in unusual ways. Some of the split palmettes, for example, are almost triangular in form, and the areas of blue ground they define have odd shapes. The colour scheme has a traditional element in the use of areas of blue and gold ground, but a wider range of colours was employed, in line with the Shumen illumination of the period. Such are the shaded pink zigzag outline of the border and the bright green and orange highlights of the interlinear gilding. The marginal devices and surah headings show the same combination of a free rendition of traditional motifs and a new colour scheme. The illumination around the colophon on folios 309b–310a, which is presented as a pair of inverted triangles, consists of gold-on-gold work with a leaf-and-flower design similar to that found on bindings, with green and orange highlights.

The binding is of dark-brown morocco and has been tooled with a joggled diaper pattern. Each cell contains four tooled dots. There is a double border tooled with patterns of European type and gilt. The doublures are of pale-blue paper and have tooled and gilt borders.
Ahmed Nazif, who
old! Ahmed Nazif
men in the 1840s
stream when he taught
old [al-As'āfah],
therefore as the capital.
also another phrase
*matin jāyibatun
on spent on a Good
well-known chronolo-
Word is, of

in the calligraphy tutor
Durrähman Tevfik’s
pieces of the Qur’an
(AD 1842–3) and
was as a scribe until the
sent to Shumen, to
Shumen style but is
manuscripts from
But Abdurrahman
leave a set of
Perhaps this indicates
recently moved back
as would expect in

the margins around
inscription is thoroughly
are sometimes
almost triangular
the colour scheme has
a good range of colours
which are the shaded pink
heights of the interlinear
combination of a free
situation around the
triangles, consists of
boundaries, with
jogged diaphragm
tooled with patterns
have tooled and
This Qur'an and cat. 57 below were both written by Salih Rami, a pupil of Seyyid Mehmed Nuri, the calligrapher responsible for cat. 54. Both were written in the same ayet ber kenär format in a similar hand, as one would expect, but their illumination is of totally different quality, indicating that in Shumen the process of copying a manuscript and decorating it were independent of one another.

This manuscript has illumination of amateur quality. As in cat. 46, the scribe clearly conceived both the text areas on the first pages (folios 1b–2a) as having a complex outline around which the illuminator would place a shaped Ottoman Baroque frame, but this has not been added. Instead, the area surrounding the text has been painted with a green-gold ground over which runs sketchy turquoise scrollwork. The same has happened on folios 56b–57a, which are inscribed with the last surah, al-Nás (cxiv), and the colophon: there the texts are surrounded by scrolls in gold only. The border around the text on folios 1b–2a has blue and gold grounds divided by gold split palmettes and overlaid with polychrome floral scrolls. To this extent, it is thoroughly traditional, but the usual alternating blue and gold grounds have been reversed, to give small patches of gold on a blue ground.

The surah headings were written in white riqa' on gold panels. Each sajdah and juz' is marked by a marginal device of poor quality, while subdivisions of the juz' are shown by inscriptions in red riqa'. The verse markers are in the form of gold blobs.

The binding of dark-brown morocco is decorated with a diaper pattern composed of small leaf motifs painted in gold. Each cell is filled with a tiny tooled and gilt rosette, worked using a tool of poor quality. There is a gilt border tooled with a four-ply s-cable pattern, outlined by single gold rules. The doublures are of pink paper.
The Shumen phenomenon

...
Single-volume Qur'an
Shumen, AH 1278 (AD 1861-2)

307 folios, 14.8 x 10 cm, with 13 lines to the page
Material: A smooth, European machine-made paper, dyed a parchment colour and burnished
Text area: 8.4 x 4.5 cm
Script: Main text in naskh, with reading marks in red; surah headings and inscriptions in marginal ornaments in white naskh
Scribe: al-Sayyid Hafiz Salih al-Ramus
Illumination: Extensive decoration on folios 1b-2a; text frames ruled in gold, black and red; verses marked by gold wheels set off with orange and blue dots; surah headings; marginal ornaments marking divisions of the text and sa’dab; decoration in the margins of folios 306b-307a and around colophon on folio 307a; edges of the text block gilded with a leafy repeat pattern
Documentation: A colophon
Binding: Contemporary, with flap
Accession no.: 9708 869

The format and hand of this Qur'an manuscript are very close to those of cat. 56, which is also the work of Salih Rami, but, as noted above, the quality of the illumination is very different, being a superb example of the Shumen style of decoration. On folios 1b-2a, the text areas have Ottoman Baroque frames in mauve, orange and pricked gold. The surrounding area is divided into an outer blue and an inner gold ground by a chain of scrollwork set with strange, atrophied motifs, and the corners are filled with Baroque scrolls. The panels for the surah headings are filled at either end with V-shaped arrangements of buds and leaves, while the wide border has grounds in two tones of gold set off with pricking and in a dark blue. These grounds are separated by floral scrolls that have white flowers with red and orange highlights and strangely shaped gold leaves, typical of Shumen work, which have rows of pricking and orange dots. The blue grounds are set with pairs of c-scrolls in mauve, orange and tones of blue, which frame a pair of roses.

The edge of the border, where a zigzag design has replaced the more traditional scalloped outline, is formed by a gold band and a coloured band that shades from white to pink. A final note of sumptuousness has been added by gilding the margins in two tones of gold.

The surah headings in the rest of the manuscript are on plain gold panels, except for those at the end of the Qur'anic text, on folio 306b, where the panels resemble those on folios 1b-2a. Folio 306b and the facing page, folio 307a, have margins decorated in gold and tarnished silver, while the frame around the colophon text on folio 307a resembles the illumination at the beginning of the manuscript. There are also marginal devices for sa'dab and jez divisions only.

The binding of cat. 57 is also much better than that of cat. 56, although the formula used in its decoration is the same: a diaper pattern formed from small leaves, with a single dot at the centre of each cell. There are, though, three gilt frames, each tooled with a different pattern. The doublures and flyleaves are of sized green paper.
The Shumen phenomenon

...
Single-volume Qur'an
Shumen, AH 1279 (AD 1862–3)

The copyist of this manuscript, Hüseyin Hüsnî, was, like Salih Rami, the scribe of cat.36 and 37, a pupil of Seyyid Mehmed Nuri, who was responsible for cat.34. Hüseyin Hüsnî's talents as a scribe were comparatively modest, but the illumination of the manuscript is a good example of the Shumen style as it had developed by the beginning of the 1860s, when, for example, the leaf motifs came to resemble gold dots.

The illumination of the first opening is dominated by a combination of green-gold and dark-blue grounds and floral trails with white flowers and yellow-gold leaves that cover them; this pattern fills the space around the text area, much of the panels for the surah headings, and the wide border. Nevertheless, the text area stands out boldly, having an Ottoman Baroque frame in orange, blue, pink and white. The margins are gilt and overlaid with red and blue floral spikes. In the rest of the manuscript, the surah headings are written in white resha on gold panels. The exception is the heading of the last surah, al-Nās (cxiv), which resembles those at the beginning of the manuscript. The text of this surah ends two-thirds of the way down the page, and the remainder is richly illuminated, as is the area around the colophon on the facing page, folio 302a. Both pages feature an oval frame. On folio 304a this contains the text, but on folio 305b it is filled with a gold and red flower motif on a pale-blue ground. Above this there is a horizontal panel with polychrome floral motifs on gold and blue grounds, and similar panels at the top and bottom of folio 304a have gold grounds only and contain an arrangement of floral motifs around a pair of c-scrolls. The remaining areas are filled with gold and blue decoration similar to that on the opening pages.

The dark-brown morocco binding is lightly tooled and painted in gold with a centre- and-corner-piece composition filled with arabesque scrolls. There is a single border with multiple gilt rules worked with a fleur-de-lis tool. The red paper doublures have a frame drawn in two tones of gold.
The Shumen phenomenon

1. the scribe of cat.36

54. Hüseyin Hüsnü's

of the manuscript

inning of the 1860s,

of the pages that cover

are gold, having an

gold leaves that cover

are gilt and overlaid

headings are written

surah, al-Nās (c.xiv),

this surah ends

minated, as is the area

an oval frame. On

red flower motif

ochrome floral motifs

folio 304a have gold

air of c-scrolls. The

the opening pages.

and a single border with

lutes have a frame
Single-volume Qur'an
Shumen, 1860s

306 folios, 12.9 x 12.3 cm, with 15 lines to the page
Material A smooth, dark-cream European machine-made paper, burnished
Text area 12.2 x 6.4 cm
Script Main text in naskh, with reading marks in red; surah headings in white ṭīqā’
Scribe al-Sayyid Mustafa Safvet
Illumination Extensive decoration on folios 19-24; text frames ruled in gold, black and red; verses marked by gold discs, with no outlines; surah headings; marginal ornaments marking juz’ divisions and sajdah; decoration around colophon on folio 306a; edges of the text block gilded with a leafy repeat pattern
Documentation A colophon
Binding Contemporary, without flap
Acc. no. QUR.21

According to the colophon on folio 306a, the scribe responsible for this Qur'an manuscript, Seyyid Mustafa Safvet, was a pupil of Hafiz Seyyid Ibrahim Felahi, who is known from other sources to have worked in Shumen (see Appendix). It is probable that Mustafa Safvet worked there, too, not least because the illumination of the manuscript is in the distinctive Shumen style, even if the layout is unusual.

On the opening pages, the text areas are circular, and they are set within a pair of crested frames rather than within the standard composition, in which both pages are surrounded by a broad, three-sided frame. In its detail, however, the illumination is of the same type as that found in cat. 58. The colophon on folio 306a is also written within a circle, which is surrounded by an illuminated frame of the same type; the main difference is the absence of the cresting. The surah headings are written in white ṭīqā’ on gold panels.

The binding is of poor quality. It is of brown leather and has a border and a central panel of diaper pattern formed by straight lines, with a single dot in each cell. The doublures are of marbled paper.
The Shumae phenomenon

A Qur'an manuscript, who is known from a report that Mustafa Safvet is in the distinctive
within a pair of crested pages are surrounded
which is of the same type within a circle, which is
ence is the absence of panels.
and a central panel cell. The doublures are
Single-volume Qur’an
Ottoman Balkans, Ramadan 1280 (February–March 1864)

This Qur’an was written and illuminated by Mustafa Zari, a student of Hafiz Mustafa Şükri. The illumination is both unusually extensive and very distinctive, but there are elements, such as the Baroque frame placed around the text on the opening pages, that resemble work done in Shumen in the 1840s to 1860s. A Balkan provenance is also supported by the fact that the manuscript was made waqf by an Ottoman official with a post relating to part of what is now Bulgaria. He was Halil Mumtaz Bey Elendi, who held the fourth rank in the Ottoman bureaucracy and the post of chief financial clerk of the sancak of Lovech, being one of the clerks in the accounts office dealing with expenditure in the province of Rumelia (Rumeli mühafazası mubāhebāh bālāfāsānde, Loja sancaktābī bālā bākītābī).

The illumination is notable for its brightness, thanks to the extensive use of two tones of gold, a silvery grey, pink and mid-blue. The opening pages have a traditional layout, except for the Baroque frames around the text areas. A striking innovation is the use of the silvery grey colour in place of blue in the borders, while blue, pink, white, orange and green were used for the floral scrolls. The most unusual feature of the manuscript, however, is the decoration of the margins on every page, in the manner of some later Indian Qur’ans. On folios 1b–32a, the margins are filled with decoration in the same style as the opening pages, on a gold ground. On all the remaining pages, the decoration consists of flowers and large leaves in two tones of gold and silver, set on a plain ground. The leaves, which have gold veins and silver dots, resemble holly leaves in shape. On folio 32a, there is also a decorated area under the last line of text, and folios 32b–33a have an illuminated composition similar in layout to that on folios 1b–2a. The designs that fill it are similar to those on folios 2b–32a, however, and there is a straight edge to the border.

The brown leather binding is lightly tooled in gold with a design of ribbons and flowers within a double frame. The doublures and flyleaves are marbled paper.
The Shumen phenomenon

...
Appendix. Shumen scribes

by Tim Stanley

Using the material in the Khalili Collection as a starting point, it has been possible to identify in excess of 50 Qur'an scribes who were active in Shumen between the 1820s and the 1870s, and the function of this Appendix is to list these men, and to summarize what little information we have on each one.1 Some of this data, extracted from manuscripts copied by these scribes, was published independently by A. Süheyl Unver in 1984 and by the present author in 2000. In the article of 2000, further information was drawn from museum, exhibition and sale catalogues and from three calligrapher’s licences of the 1860s, which, as mentioned above (pp.222–3), are remarkable for the number of calligraphers who countersigned them. The first two licences, referred to below as diplomas I and II, were both issued in AH 1277 (AD 1860–61), one to Seyyid Mehmed Sadik Rafa,2 the other to Seyyid Hasan Vehbi.3 The third licence (diploma III) was issued to Seyyid Hüseyin Handi in AH 1286 (AD 1869–70).4

The sound data from these two articles has now been collated and is published here as a single alphabetical sequence (Part One). As pointed out above, however, there are question marks over some of the names included by Unver in his list of scribes: two of his ‘Shumen’ scribes were pupils of Seyyid Süleyman Vehbi, who is known to have been active only in Istanbul and Bursa, two were probably trained in Edirne, and a fifth worked in Cairo. For this reason, Unver’s information has been treated with caution and incorporated in Part One only where some form of corroboration is available, while the uncorroborated information from Unver’s article has been published separately (Part Two).

In many cases, the information on an individual includes one or more references to a master–pupil relationship. This is possible because, as we saw in the case of Mehmed Nuri, many scribes included the name of the master or masters who taught them in the colophons of their manuscripts, as Ottoman calligraphers had done intermittently since the 16th century. Such information on scribes trained and working in Istanbul has been matched with data from other sources to establish long sequences of master–pupil relationships, which have been expressed in the form of ‘genealogical’ trees.5 The information on the Shumen calligraphers is not yet sufficient to allow the construction of such a synoptic genealogy; it consists merely of a number of isolated relationships, such as those between Hasan Aşki and his teacher Osman Şevki on the one hand and his own pupils on the other.

On a more positive note we may refer to three larger groups of scribes taught by the same master, namely, the ten pupils of Evliya-zade Ahmed Nazif, the seven pupils of Ahmed Zarrif and the four pupils of Mehmed Nuri. We do not, though, know whether these three groups were linked.6 Our findings are, then, that at least 36 scribes – roughly two-thirds of those listed in this appendix – belonged to one of these three sub-schools.

The information in Part One should be used as critically as that in Part Two, especially where it is secondhand. There are several pairs of entries for calligraphers with the same names, who may have been the same person, for example, and a simple misreading, such as ‘Hasan’ for ‘Hüseyin’ or vice versa, may have created ghost entries. It should be noted, too, that the forms of names and titles follow the documentary sources, so there is considerable variation in references. For example, Ahmed Nazif appears as Evliya-zade Ahmed Nazif, Seyyid Ahmed Nazif, Hacı Hafız Ahmed Nazif and Hacı Ahmed Nazif.
Part One
Shumen scribes for whom there is sound evidence

Abdurrahman Hülimi, Seyyid, pupil of Hafız Mehmed Süküti and of Topçu Mehmed Süküri. He appears as the copyst of the two sumptuously illuminated Qur’ans mentioned above (pp.231-4), which were presented by Sultan Abdülhamid II to ‘Ali Rifat Pasha of Egypt and al-Husayn, Sherif of Mecca. Abdurrahman Hülimi also appears as an examiner in diplomas 1 and 3.

Abdurrahman Tevfik, Seyyid. He is known from the colophons of three Qur’ans dated AH 1258 (AD 1842-3),5 and AH 1265 (AD 1846-7).6 In the colophons of these manuscripts he named his teachers. The first was the Shumen calligrapher Evliya-zade Ahmed Nazifi, and the second was the court calligrapher Lâz Ömer Efendi,7 with whom he had studied in Istanbul. Abdurrahman Tevfik was in Istanbul when he completed his Qur’an of AH 1256, but all three Qur’ans by him are decorated in the Shumen style. He was the teacher of Ahmed Naib and Osman Hülimi.

Ahmed Fuad, Seyyid, pupil of Ahmed Zarifi. He is known primarily from a Qur’an dated AH 1292 (AD 1875) in the Istanbul University Library.8 He also added a supplementary licence to diploma III.

Ahmed Naib of Siliata, Hafız, pupil of Abdurrahman Tevfik. According to Ünver, he completed a Qur’an in AH 1261 (AD 1845).

Ahmed Nazifi, Evliya-zade. As noted above, he was one of the main teachers of Shumen calligraphers, whose pupils included Abdurrahman Tevfik, Hasan Nejî, Hüseyin Zahidî, Ismail Beşim, Mehmed Hekmetli, Mehmed Süküri, Mustafa Rifatî, Osman Asım, Sâleh Namiki and Yûsuf Râshîf. An undated Qur’an with illumination in the Shumen style (Christie’s, London, 9 October 1990, lot 66) was, according to the sale catalogue, signed by Ahmed Nazifi, a pupil of Hafız Mustafa Süküri, but this may have been the work of a later scribe of the same name.

Ahmed Refik, pupil of Ahmed Zarifi. He is known from a Qur’an dated AH 1264 (AD 1847-8) in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris,1 as well as two Qur’ans dated AH 1266 (AD 1849-50) and AH 1267-8 (AD 1850-51) recorded by Ünver.

Ahmed Sükri, Topçu. He was known to Ünver as a pupil of ‘Ali Qanun. He produced a Qur’an dated AH 1277 (AD 1856-7) and as the teacher of Ahmed Zarifi and Hüseyin Vassar. As noted above (p.226), he is the subject of the only notice in Inal’s Snatatter that explicitly refers to Shumen as a centre of calligraphy.


Ahmed Zarifi. According to Ünver, he was a pupil of Topçu Ahmed Sükri. He appears as an examiner in diploma I, and his importance can be judged by the appearance of his name in the colophons of his numerous pupils, who included Ahmed Fuad, Ahmed Refik, Hasan Hamdi, Ismail Azmi, Ismail Necib, Mehmed Sâbit and ‘Ali Qanun.

Ali Osman Hülimi, pupil of Seyyid Mehmed Nuri. Ünver recorded him as a scribe responsible for many manuscripts, including a large-format Qur’an dated AH 1271 (AD 1854-5). He also produced two Qur’an manuscripts in the collection of Ghasan I, Shaker (MS 35 and MS 13), which are dated AH 1270 (AD 1854-5) and AH 1277 (AD 1860),12 and another dated AH 1272 (AD 1855-6).13

Halil Zehdi, pupil of Seyyid Mehmed Nuri. He is known from the colophon of a Qur’an in the SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library, Sofia (MS 953-541), written by his own pupil Osman Nuri in AH 1287 (AD 1870-71).14
HASAN AŞIKI, Seyyid, pupil of Osman Şevki. Üneş recorded him twice: firstly on the basis of a Qur'an dated AH 1254 (AD 1858–9) and a copy of the Mevlid dated AH 1256 (1840–41), and secondly on the basis of a copy of the Da'at al-khayrât dated AH 1254 (AD 1858–9). He was the scribe of four other Qur'ans dated AH 1268 (AD 1853–4), AH 1277 (AD 1866–67), and AH 1285 (AD 1868–9). He is also known from copies made by two pupils, Osman Şevki and Seyyid Mehmed Emin Nabi, and he appears as an examiner in diplomas 1 and 2.

HASAN HAMDI, pupil of AHMED ZARIFI. Known from one undated manuscript.

HASAN NEV'İ, pupil of Seyyid Ahmed Nazifi. Known from one unpublished Qur'an in a private collection dated AH 1260 (AD 1844).

HASAN RIZA, pupil of Haci Mehmed Şevki, the copyst of a Qur'an dated AH 1275 (AD 1858–9) in the Nafiz Paşa Library (MS.15), recorded by Üneş.

HASAN VERBİ, Tentene-zade Seyyid, pupil of Seyyid Isma'il Necib. Known from two unpublished Qur'ans in a private collection. One, his 79th, is dated Shumen, 15 Jumada I–Ula 1266 (29 March 1849). The other is dated Shaban 1269 (May–June 1853). He was the teacher of a scribe called Ahmed Şükri.

HASAN VERBİ, Seyyid, pupil of Seyyid Hafiz Osman Hilmî. He was the examinee in diploma II.

HÜSEYİN HAMDI, Seyyid, pupil of İbrahim Felahi. He was the examinee in diploma III.

HÜSEYİN HÜSENI, Seyyid, pupil of Seyyid Mehmed Nuri. He was responsible for cart. 98, which is dated Shumen, AH 1279 (AD 1862–3).

HÜSEYİN RÜŞDI. He appears as an examiner in diploma II. He may be the same person as Hacı Rüşdi.

HÜSEYİN VASİF, pupil of Topçu Ahmed Şükri. According to Üneş, he was responsible for one hundred copies of the Qur'an. An unpublished example in a private collection is dated AH 1261 (AD 1848–9).

HÜSEYİN ZAHİDI, pupil of AHMED NAZIFI. Known from two unpublished Qur'ans in a private collection, one undated, the other dated AH 1262 (AD 1846).

İbrahim Felahi. In diploma II he appears as an examiner, and in diploma III as the teacher of its recipient, Seyyid Hüseyn Hamdi. Another pupil was Seyyid Mustafa Safvet, who was responsible for cart. 59.

İbrahim Namık, pupil of Mustafa Rifat, perhaps Mustafa lişâtî. According to Üneş, he copied a small Qur'an dated AH 1277 (AD 1866–67).

İSMAIL AZMI, pupil of AHMED ZARIFI. Responsible for a Qur'an dated AH 1289 (AD 1872–3).

İSMAIL BİSİM, pupil of AHMED NAZIFI. Üneş recorded a Qur'an dated AH 1275 (AD 1858–9) and another manuscript dated AH 1277 (AD 1866–67). He also appears as an examiner in two of the diplomas noted above.

İSMAIL NECIB, a pupil of AHMED ZARIFI. This scribe copied a Qur'an in Shumen in AH 1264 (AD 1847–8). Other Qur'ans by him are dated AH 1260 (AD 1844) and AH 1268 (AD 1851–2). The latter is decorated in a fully 'rococo' manner unrelated to the Shumen style of illumination. He was the teacher of Tentene-zade Seyyid Hasan Verbî, and he may have been the Necib Efendi who appears as an examiner in diploma II.

MEHMET EMİN FAHİK, Seyyid Hacı. He appears as an examiner in diploma I.

MEHMET EMİN NABI, Seyyid, pupil of HASAN AŞIKI. Known from an unpublished Qur'an in a private collection dated Rajab 1277 (January–February 1861).
Mehmed Sükrü, pupil of Evliya-zade Ahmed Nazifî. Known from an unpublished Qur’an in a private collection dated AH 1264 (AD 1847–8).

Mehmed Sükrü, pupil of Evliya-zade Ahmed Nazifî. He is known from a Qur’an in the Ghassan I. Shaker Collection (MS.86) dated Shumen, AH 1270 (AD 1853–4), and from the notice in Son Hatattâlî quoted above, in which reference is made to two Qur’ans he copied in AH 1276 (AD 1859–60). Mehmed Sükrü is also known from the colophons of two Qur’ans by his pupil Abdurrahman Hilmi.

Mehmed Sükrü, Hafız. He appears as a teacher of Abdurrahman Hilmi.

Mustafa Fehmi. He appears as the teacher of Seyyid Mehmed Sükrü and as an examiner in diploma II.

Mustafa Lutfî. He appears as an examiner in diploma III.

Mustafa Nüzheti. As noted above, he produced a Qur’an in the Topkapsî Palace Library (MS.M.57) dated AH 1272 (AD 1855–6) and illuminated in the Shumen style.

Mustafa Rıza, pupil of Evliya-zade Ahmed Nazifî. He was responsible for two Qur’ans dated AH 1261 (AD 1845) and AH 1270 (AD 1853–4). See also İbrahim Namik.

Mustafa Safvet, Seyyid, pupil of İbrahim Felahi. He is known only as the copyst of cat.39.

Mustafa Sûrûî. He appears as an examiner in two of the diplomas noted above, and he can be identified with the scribe who copied a Qur’an dated AH 1270 (AD 1853–4).

Necîb Efendi. See İsmail Necîb.

Osman Asım, Hafız, pupil of Haci Hafız Ahmed Nazifî. He was known to Ünver through a Qur’an dated AH 1291 (AD 1874–5).
OSMAN HİLMİ, Seyyid Hafız, pupil of ABDURRAHMAN TEVFİK. He copied an unpublished undated Qur’an in a private collection, and he appears as the teacher of Seyyid HASAN VEHBI in diploma II.

OSMAN NURİ. See HALİL ZÜHDI, pupil of Seyyid Mehmed Nuri.

OSMAN ŞEVKİ, pupil of Seyyid HASAN AŞIKI. He is known from two Qur’ans dated AH 1283 (AD 1866–7) and AH 1285 (AD 1868–9).20

RÜŞDİ, Haci. He appears as an examiner in diploma I. He may have been the same person as HÜSEYİN RÜŞDİ, who appears as an examiner in diploma II.

SALİH NAMIK, Seyyid, pupil of Evliya-zade AHMED NAZIİ. Known from the colophon of an undated Qur’an.21

SALİH RAMI, Seyyid Hafiz, pupil of MEHMED NURİ. His signature is found in three Qur’ans. The earliest, dated AH 1270 (AD 1853–4), was offered for sale in London in 1992, while the other two are cat.36 and 57 above. The first was completed on 8 Rabī‘ al-Akhīr 1270 (8 January 1854), and the second is dated Shumen, AH 1278 (AD 1861–2).

ŞA‘BAN ŞEVKİ, pupil of AHMED ZARİİ, is known from a single undated manuscript.22 Üner recorded a Şmnulu Şa‘ban, a pupil of Ahmed Zarif who produced a miniature Qur’an. Presumably he can be identified with Şa‘ban Şevki.

YUSUF RASİH. He was responsible for a Qur’an in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul (MS. 469), which is dated AH 1270 (AD 1852–3). In the colophon he describes himself as a pupil of Hacı AHMED NAZİİ.23

YUSUF RİZA. He appears as an examiner in diplomas I and III.

YUSUF SİDÎK, pupil of Talib Fu‘âlî. He was responsible for a Qur’an decorated in the Shumen style produced between 1863 and 1873 and now in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.24

PART TWO
Scribes recorded only by Süheyl Ünver

ABDURRAHMAN of Shumen. ‘Someone remembers seeing a work by him.’

ALİ HAMDİ, Hafiz. He copied his 50th Qur’an in AH 1253 (AD 1839–40), which was decorated in AH 1262 (AD 1846) by an illuminator called Mehmed.

HASAN AMAN, pupil of Hüseyin Vehbi, who copied a Qur’an dated AH 1266 (AD 1849).

HÜSEYİN HAMİDİ of Shumen, Haci, pupil of Ismail Zühtü, who copied a Qur’an dated AH 1248 (AD 1832–3).

HÜSEYİN HAMİDİ, Hafiz, pupil of Mehmed Said Tab‘î. He most probably worked in Edirne rather than Shumen (see above, p.216).

IBRAHİM EDİEM of Shumen, pupil of his maternal uncle Mehmed Şerif who produced 25 Qur’ans and lived a long life. İSMAİL ŞEVKİ, pupil of Süleyman Vehbi. He most probably worked in Bursa rather than Shumen (see above, p.226).

KÖSE İMAM. ‘Baha Ersin has seen a work by him.’
Appendix. Shumen scribes

Mehmed Ali Ulvi, pupil of Ismail Şevki, who copied a Qur’an dated AH 1238 (AD 1822-3) in Nafız Paşa Library (Ms.6).


Mustafa Şevki, Hafiz, pupil of Mehmed Said Tabi. He most probably worked in Edirne rather than Shumen (see above, p.226).

Osman Nuri of Shumen, pupil of Hüseyin Filimi, who was still alive in AH 1296 (AD 1879).

Osman Raşid, Hafiz, pupil of Süleyman Yebbi. He most probably worked in Bursa rather than Shumen (see above, p.226).


1. No definite figure can be given as several of the entries below may be duplicates, as in the case of “İsmail Necib” and “Nevi Efendi”. Such a figure would in any case be of very transient value.
5. See, for example, Rado, no date, pp.281-395; Derman 1991, pp.186-8; and Bayani, Comadini & Stanley 1999, p.73.
6. In the case of Mehmed Nuri’s sub-school, the master-pupil relationships extend into a fourth ‘generation’ on account of Osman Nuri, a pupil of Halil Zübî, one of Mehmed Nuri’s four known pupils.
9. For Ömer Vefi, see Habib 1530, p.163; İnal 1955, pp.359-61.
10. Ms.56391; see Karatay 1911, no.228; also Üver 1984, pp.31, 34. The manuscript had been left unilluminated, and it may have been brought to Istanbul when the scribe fled Shumen in 1877 or 1878.
As Manijeh Bayani and Tim Stanley have shown in the present volume, the production of Qur’ans in the 19th century in Turkey and Iran is particularly associated with ‘pocket’ books, volumes of small format, often with experimental layouts and with fine illumination and bindings, intended for private devotion rather than public recitation. How far this represented a shift in patronage from the traditional pious foundations and those who endowed them is difficult to judge, but in both Turkey and Iran they testify to a significant evolution in religious practice. In Iran, especially, their layout also reflects general changes in the use of the Qur’an, notably, to record significant events in the life of a family—births and deaths, much like family bibles in 19th-century Victorian England—and increasing recourse to the Holy Book for divination (see pp. 86–97).

Qur’ans of much smaller format were also produced, but these were less of an innovation, having been attached in metal or leather cases to the base of battle standards from at least the 6th century onwards (cf. cat. 62). From their association with Ottoman battle standards, such as those exhibited in the Museo Correr in Venice, these were known as sancak Qur’ans. There seems to be no reason a priori why such Qur’ans (e.g., cat. 61) should not have been attached to Iranian battle standards too, though the pictorial evidence seems to be lacking. They could be specially written for this purpose, but the more frequently they were borne into battle against a defeated enemy the greater their amuletic efficacy was considered to be, so that when a standard wore out and fragments from it were woven into or sewn on to its replacement, the sancak Qur’ans from the old standard were also attached to it. For the most part they were octagonal in format and, for the sake of space, were generally written on specially fine paper in ghubar. A miniature octagonal Qur’an has also been attributed to Northern India or the Deccan, as has an octagonal gold box for a similar Qur’an, datable to the 17th or 18th century. Sometimes, sancak Qur’ans were in the form of small scrolls, in elaborately faceted metal cases. It may also be that Qur’ans in larger scroll format, that is, too large to be worn as amulets on the person, were intended for the protection of standards and those who carried them. In the present state of our knowledge, however, this must remain a speculation.

We do not know whether in Ottoman Turkey such amuletic Qur’ans were also items of adornment or whether they were confined to battle standards. In contemporary Iran, however, extra-small-format Qur’ans were attached to belts or arm bands (bāzāni), or even to turbans, where they served as amulets or phylacteries. Such Qur’ans, both Ottoman and Iranian, are characterized by a general absence of verse-count, marginal text divisions and, in the Iranian case, of the prayers to be recited on commencing or concluding the recitation of the Qur’an. However, in neither case is the physical distinction between Qur’ans for devotion and Qur’ans as amulets water tight, so that small size is not an unambiguous indication of their function.

The purpose of the rather larger Qur’ans in the Khalili Collection in scroll format is more difficult to determine. Most are not hand-scrolls and are written from top to bottom, and the general absence of rollers means that consultation of the later suras would have involved unrolling the whole document. Their contents may vary, but for the most part they do not include either the standard textual divisions of Qur’ans in codex form or marginal commentaries, and in any case the use of naskh ghubar in even the largest scrolls tends to make the text difficult to read, so that their primary purpose can scarcely have been devotional. They are characterized by their complex decorative layout and by the use of stencilled horizontal or vertical panels, at 90 degrees to the direction of the scroll and often differentiated by colouring, enclosing bold inscriptions in contrasting script, including invocations, short prayers, the ‘Ninety-Nine Names of God’ and Qur’anic ayahs.

Script arranged in parallel lines to form decorative shapes, known as carmina figurata or calligrammes, after Guillaume Apollinaire’s poems of that name, occurs in Western manuscripts from the late Classical period onwards. Naskh ghubar compositions seem, however, to be a later Islamic taste, so the Western parallel is doubtless accidental. The possibility remains, however, that there is some connection with micrography in medieval Hebrew manuscripts from the Yemen and the Iberian
peninsula of the 13th–15th centuries, though these make use of both solid figures composed of script and inscriptions creating figures in outline. Hebrew micrography is used mostly for marginal material, especially the Masoretic commentaries, rather than for the scriptural text, or for double-page ‘carpet’ spreads at the beginning or end of Old Testament codices. These, like the marginal decoration of the opening spreads of a Pentateuch, which transcribes the full text of the Psalms, can hardly have been intended to be read. Unsurprisingly, the strapwork illumination of this particular volume is heavily indebted to Hispano-Moresque ornament, but the source could as well be Mudejar as straightforwardly Islamic and could draw upon decoration in some other medium. One feature of micrography in Hebrew manuscripts that is apparently not shared by Qur’ans in naskh ghabār is that the forms used often echo the sense of the text, as for example, a casket floating on zigzag lines at the opening of the Book of Exodus, inspired by the infant Moses floating in his rush basket on the waters of the Nile.

1. By no means all of these amulets were complete Qur’ans. They could, on the contrary, have been selections of surahs, or even a single surah, such as al-An‘ām (xiv), or even repeated single verses, such as the ǧa‘at al-kur‘f (31, verse 31). In the present catalogue, however, only those with complete, or virtually complete, texts have been considered.
2. The term strictly refers to a size of script, rather than to a distinct hand. The text of Qur’ans written in ghabār is accordingly naskh ghabār, though the marginal commentaries could well be minute nastā‘īq or diska‘i‘ah ghabār.

returns

Qu'rans of non-standard format
Two-volume Qur'an
Ottoman Turkey, 18th century

Qur'ans of this size and format are usually written in two volumes since they were made to be worn on armbands (hence the Persian term ḥazīband) as talismans. A similar Qur'an, sold at Christie’s, bore a note in English: ‘This Koran taken from a Turk on the field of battle after his death. Given to K. George 4th [George IV of England] Monsieur de Narishkian’. Very few signed and dated Qur’ans of this type are recorded. Other miniature Qur’ans in oblong format are known, and these might have been worn as a pendant around the neck. They are, however, larger in size and are written in one volume. There are fragments of a Kufic Qur’an measuring 3 by 4 centimetres in the al-Sabah Collection, which takes the use of the Qur’an for talismanic purposes back to at least the 11th century.

The manuscript opens with a double-page spread of illumination (folios 1b–2a) in gold, orange and turquoise blue, depicting carnations and flowers on a gold ground. The illumination of the opening of volume two is confined to a head-piece (folio 15) with similar motifs; both have tassel-like elements stemming from the points of the octagons. This Qur’an lacks all verse and juz’ markers. Surat titles are written in red riqā’ (as in the Christie’s Qur’an) on a plain gold ground. Both volumes end with the uninscribed parts of the page covered with plain gold.

The lacquered covers, which have lost their sheen, are 19th-century Iranian and must have been exposed to considerable heat. They depict sprays of roses on a gold-sprinkled red ground bordered with black bands of off-white dots. The doublettes are plain black. The two volumes each have an enamelled case, but from two different sets. The gold-engraved case of volume 1 is the second of the set and bears surah al-Ḥākīm (cxii), verses 3–4, on top; verses 1–3 would have been on the other case. On the sides are invocations to the various names of God: ya sūrahā ya bāḥrān ya gharšān ya bāṣṣān ya wāṣṣān ya dāyān (‘O Thou the Glorious! O Thou the Decisive Proof! O Thou the Forgiving! O Thou the Most Compassionate! O Thou the Propitious! O Thou the Judge!’). The borders are enamelled with rosebuds in the corners and a band of petal-shaped motifs in blue and pink. The base has an enamelled sun with a woman’s face at the centre (partially damaged). The inside is plain enamel of pale turquoise-blue. The case of volume 1 is enamelled on gilded silver and depicts a bird-and-flower motif in blue, pink and white. Each side bears a flower spray and the plain silver base is left unenamelled. The depiction of birds on a case for the Qur’an is quite unusual. The inside is gilded.

since they were made through a gold-sprinkled and gilded line. A similar method is described in the mentioned volume. There are additional remarks in the Prb Collection, which is referred to as a pendant in the 15th century. The two leaves (folia 1b-2a) in the octagons, as well as the inscription in red vāsī (as in the Sachs Collection), are inscribed parts of the miniature Qu'ran.

TheIranian and most...
62

Sancak Qur’an
Ottoman Turkey, first half of the 16th century

288 folios, 6.6. cm across octagon, with 24 lines to the page.
Material A smooth, brownish-cream laid paper, burnished to a gloss and water-stained.
Script Main text in nasiq ghubar, with red ink used for titles in minute script.
Illumination Decorative illuminated pages at both beginning (folios 1b–2a) and end (folio 278b) and around opening text (folios 28–30); octagonal text frame of narrow blue and gold bands, with gold and blue rules; sura headings in panels.
Binding 19th-century red leather.
Accesion no. QUR 457.
Published Rogers 2000, no. 19.

The manuscript opens with a double-page spread of illumination in gold and blue arranged in an octagonal frame bordered with a narrow gold band within black and extra red and blue rules (folios 1b–2a). The central gold cross-shaped motif is set in a blue eight-pointed star, which in turn is set in a gold lobed shamsah, on a blue ground all decorated with four-petalled rosettes and gold scrolls outlined in black with flower-heads in colours. Unlike other copies of the Qur’an, where the opening folios of the text bear the first and the beginning of the second surah, this one bears only the surah al-Fatihah (i) on folios 2b–3a written in four lines in each page on a gold ground in a compressed octagonal frame, surrounded by eight blue lappets each containing a four-lobed rosette and scrolls in gold outlined in black set in a gold ground decorated with polychrome follet scrolls. Folio 278b, which has similar illumination, must be one half of a similar double-page illuminated spread. There is no colophon but the decoration is comparable to another Ottoman Qur’an in Istanbul, illuminated by Bayram ibn Derviş Şir in AH 956 (AD 1549–50). Surah titles are written in white on gold with blue edges, or in gold on blue with red edges.

The plain red binding bears a note on the front doublure stating that it was renewed in AH 1239 (AD 1823–4), very probably when the earlier standard to which the Qur’an was originally attached was replaced.

63

Sancak Qur’an
Ottoman Turkey, 18th or 19th century

Thickness 2 cm., across octagon 3.1 cm., with 18 lines to the page.
Material A smooth, cream, lightly burnished paper.
Script Main text in fine nasiq ghubar.
Illumination Text frame of a gold band within black rules; gilt fore-edge.
Binding 19th-century brown leather.
Accesion no. QUR 915.
1. The volume is now so tightly bound that the text could not be checked nor the manuscript foliated without causing grave damage.

The Qur’an is misbound and the opening page bears part of surah Yā午后 (XXXVI).

A number of folios appear to be replacements in some subsequent restoration of the manuscript and lack the octagonal text frame. The text ends with no colophon. The present last folio bears surah al-Fatihah (i) in a lobed medallion with an illuminated surround of slender floral scrolls on a gold ground and is likely to be the original opening folio, which is now bound upside down. At a later date, surah al-Fatihah (i) was written on the verso of the original last folio. The confusing sequence of the text, evidently the result of a later rebinding, is in any case an indication that, despite its decrepitude, this copy of the Qur’an was regarded as sufficiently important not to be discarded.

The dark brown leather covers are decorated with gilt diaper of squares formed by criss-crossing leaves and a dot within each square and edged with a wide gold chain band. The doublures are covered with pink paper with a printed geometric pattern. The case is hard brown leather, bordered on the top with a continuous band of gold leaves.

A loose turquois paper illuminated in gold and colours, was inserted in the case. On one side is marked in the centre as ‘the noble seal of the Seal of [all] prophets’. The texts include the shahādah and the ṣiyah al-būrat (below the seal) and the last three surahs followed by the first surah of the Qur’an around the central roundel. The other side bears a slightly truncated version of the Ottoman Ḳadah in the tradition reported by ‘Ali.
The manuscript is contained in a case that is ornamented both inside and outside, the inside being in black and gold, the outside being in dark blue and gold. The case is thought to have been made for the third Caliph 'Ali, and contains verses 10:54-56 (from the Koran) in gold on a black background. The case is thought to have been made during the caliphate of 'Ali, who was the son of the Prophet Muhammad.

The case is decorated in gold on a black background, with designs that are thought to have been inspired by the Persian style. The case is thought to have been made during the caliphate of 'Ali, who was the son of the Prophet Muhammad.

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64
Single-volume Qur’an
Iran, first half of the 18th century

This miniature Qur’an was written in small naskh with a fine pen, which made it difficult to observe the relative proportions of the letters and the spacing between words. The verse markers, the illumination and the fine lacquer covers show that it was produced in the late Safavid period.

The manuscript opens with a double-page spread of illumination on folios 1b–2a. The central panels contain the index to the Qur’an, arranged in gold and silver squares separated by black and red rules. The surah titles are written alternately in black or red riq’a. The margins are decorated with scrolling gold blossoms or stylized grapes and leaves outlined in black and highlighted with red dots on an uncoloured ground (there is identical decoration on folios 4b–5a, reminiscent of 18th-century lacquer). The following pages (folios 2b–1a) bear the prayer to be recited on commencing the Qur’an, in red naskh in lobed medallions and mantels on a plain gold ground. The field around these and the corner-pieces are illuminated with scrolling flowers and leaves in gold and polychrome and are defined by using different-coloured grounds. The margins are illuminated with gold scrolling leaves outlined in black and interspersed with polychrome blossoms on an uncoloured ground.

The main text starts on a double-page spread of illumination (folios 3b–4a). The text on folios 3b–5a is written in clouds reserved against gold. No reading instruction is given. Catchwords are in naskh. Text divisions are marked in the margin with gold devices outlined in red: lobed tear shapes for juz’, half-juz’ and sajdah markers and lozenges for fath, all with finials. Surah titles are in red riq’a on plain gold panels. The main text is followed by a short prayer in riq’a.

A note in a hasty casual hand starting on folio 28b and ending on folio 29a was written by Mirza Mahmud Khan Hakim al-Mulk, who protests his undying loyalty to the recipient of the Qur’an, Mirza ‘Ali Aghar Khan, with the date, Shawwal 1315 (March–April 1898). On folio 29a the note is accompanied by an impression of Mahmud Mirza Hakim al-Mulk’s personal oval seal, which reads: yā allāh al-mahmūd, 1310 (‘O God, the Praised, AH 1310’ [AD 1892–3]).

Mirza Mahmud Khan Hakim al-Mulk was the son of ‘Alīnāqī ‘ulūm-bādī (‘chief physician’), who was originally from Isfahan but resided in Bushehr. He studied medicine under Dr Tholozan, the French personal physician of Naṣir al-Dīn Shah. After the death of his brother Abu’l-Hassan, who was the physician of Prince Musaffar al-Din, Mahmud became one of the crown prince’s physicians, and in AH 1313 (AD 1896–7) was given the title of Mushir al-Hakam. When Musaffar al-Din became Shah, Mirza Mahmud was appointed his personal physician with the title of Hakim al-Mulk. After the dismissal of Amin al-Sultan in AH 1314 (AD 1896–7), and his exile to Qum, Hakim al-Mulk became a minister in the cabinet headed by ‘Abd al-Husayn Farmanfarma and his name is given as one of the three influential figures who engineered Amin al-Sultan’s downfall and exile. This Qur’an was sent by Hakim al-Mulk to Amin al-Sultan, obviously to scotch the rumour that he had been responsible for his dismissal. While in exile all Amin al-Sultan’s correspondence must have been censored (as it was later in 1904), which may explain why a Qur’an of such a small size was chosen, for it would have been easier to smuggle to him.

The lacquered covers depict a bunch of polychrome flowers and leaves, outlined and highlighted in gold on a mustard ground, bordered with a scrolling band of blossoms and leaves in gold on a black ground. The doublures are decorated with a narcissus, drawn and highlighted in gold on a red ground.
which made it difficult to touch in words. The
work was produced in 588/1190 by a
master whose name is no longer known. It
contains 100 pages, each divided into four
columns, and 10 lines of text per column. The
book is decorated with gold and silver square
frames, and features a variety of motifs such as
gold and silver grapevines, red grapes and
gold and silver ground (there is no
difference). The following pages are
illuminated with gold and silver, and some
pages are decorated with gold and silver
blossoms
(12b–13a). The text
in the small
miniature style is given.

The inscription above the gold devices on
the miniature contains the name of the
author, Hakim al-Mulk's
(Lakhdar)
(Praised, AH 588)
(The Chief
Physician)

who studied medicine

and became its master. After the death of
the Great Master, he was given the title
of

In exile to Qum,

a

Sa'di

Farnam Farma

and Amin al-Sultan's
dynasty,

al-Farnam Farma

to check the

may explain why

to smuggle to him.5

ruins, outlined and
decorated with

Arabian

259
65
Single-volume Qur’an
Iran, 18th and 19th centuries

This small Qur’an was most probably copied in the 18th century. The illuminated on folios 1b–3a and 19b–220a and the surah headings are original to the text. The original manuscript was cut down to its present size to fit the lacquered covers in the 19th century when the double-page spread (folios 1b–2a) of illumination bearing the index to the Qur’an, written in red and black on gold and silver squares, was added. At the same time the illuminated devices for abbreviated *sūrah headers* indications and surah titles were also added at the top corners and many text division markers repainted.

The text starts with an 18th-century double-page spread (folios 2b–3a) of illumination, mainly in gold and blue with touches of polychrome. The text on these pages is written in clouds reserved against gold. The cartouches above give the surah titles and those below bear verses 77–9 of surah al-Waqi‘ab (lvii).

Verse markers are gold whorls, an earlier tradition that was still alive in the 18th century but rarely practised in the 19th. The text division markers are all almond-shaped devices with blue finials, distinguishable only by the words written in them. Most of these were repainted in the 19th century (for an original marker, see folio 2:26a). The indications for *sajadah* and occasionally *zikr* (folio 25b) are written in plain cherry-red *rikā‘*. Catchwords are in an informal hand resembling *nasta‘liq*. Surah headings are in illuminated panels with the titles written in red *rikā‘* on plain gold cartouches set in lapis-blue panels decorated with gold and polychrome. The heading for surah al-Tawbah (93) (folio 81b) is in cherry-red *rikā‘*, and is the only one not to be in a panel. Space was left for it, so it may have been missed out by oversight. But if it was deliberately not written in a panel this could be because this surah is the only one in the Qur’an not to begin with the *basmahab*.

The final two chapters are written on a double-page spread of illumination (folios 266b–270a) and, though similar in form and motifs to the opening double page, are executed in a different colour scheme, mainly of cherry-red, gold and lapis-blue. As on folios 1b–12a, the text is written in clouds reserved against gold, but the margins are decorated with scrolling leaves and florins in gold outlined in black with touches of colour on an uncoloured ground. An unusual practice is the inclusion of verses 77–9 of surah al-Waqi‘ab (lvii) in the lower cartouches. This quotation always appears at the beginning as a reminder that unless the reader is ritually pure, the Qur’an should not be touched.
Miniature Qur'ans

Unlike contemporary Qur'ans, this copy lacks prayers to be recited on commencing and concluding the reading and there is no trace of a colophon. Despite these lacunae, like cat. 6 it was sufficiently prized for its lacquer covers, to have the index with gold and silver illumination and the devices at the top corners of each folio added, and the faint text division markers repainted. The lacquered covers depict flowers on a brown ground, with the borders decorated with flowers and leaves in gold on a black ground, and are similar to the covers of another Qur'an in the Collection dated to the third quarter of the 19th century. The doublures are lacquered plain red with gold tassels edging the inner frame and are bordered with a band of repeating leaves in gold on a black ground.
Single-volume Qur'an
Iran, first half of the 19th century

This small Qur'an starts with a double-page spread of illumination on folios 1b–2a. The central panels contain red medallions and blue pendants in which the prayer to be recited on commencing the Qur'an is written in gold riqâ'. The field on which the medallions and pendants are set and the margins are illuminated with scrolling flowers and leaves in gold outlined in black, with touches of colour on an uncoloured ground. The main text of the Qur'an starts with a richly illuminated double-page spread predominantly in cherry-red, lapis-blue and gold (folios 1b–3a). The verse markers are lozenge-shaped and are similar to those in cat.5 and 20. Catchwords are in naskh. Surah titles are written in gold riqâ' on blue or red cartouches set in illuminated panels. The title of each chapter is repeated in illuminated roundels at the top left-hand corner of the 'a' folios (a few folios are unfinished — 33, 85, 86 and 87), while the corresponding right-hand page has an identical device containing the abbreviated terms for isâbâbah. The main text is followed by a prayer (folio 207a) and then a double-page illuminated spread similar to folios 1b–2a, with the prayer to be recited on concluding the Qur'an (folios 207b–208a).

Traditions based on various Shi'i sources concerning the virtues of reciting particular surahs are written in vertical cartouches in the margin in shikastah in clouds reserved against gold. The colophon of these texts on folio 207a is signed by Abd Allah al-Isfahani, but the only recorded scribe of this name is Abd Allah bin 'Ashur Isfahani, who was a naskh scribe (see cat.20); since the signature relates to the nasta'liq texts he is unlikely to be the scribe of the marginal notes in this Qur'an.

A note by an unnamed owner on folio 208b (folios 208a–209a are blank) states that the Qur'an was a present to him from his sister, 'Aziz al-Dawlah, on his departure to Europe in the year AH 1290 (AD 1873–4), and that he gave it to his 7-year-old son, Husaynquli (later titled 'Imad al-Saltanah) in Hamadan on 19 Ramadan 1292 (19 October 1873). This must have been written by 'Abd al-Samad Mirza 'Izz al-Dawlah (AH 1261–1348/AD 1845–1926), the brother of Nasir al-Din Shah (and the third son of Muhammad Shah), who accompanied the Shah on his first trip to Europe in that year, and it was on this occasion that this Qur'an was given to him. Among his posts was the governorship of Hamadan, where the note
was written. 'Aziz al-Dawlah was a half-sister of Nasir al-Din Shah. She is described as a lady who loved reading poetry, and possessed precious manuscripts in her small library.

The lacquer-painted covers bear medallions and pendants in the central panels and borders with cartouches, all decorated with gold arabesques on a black ground. They are on a field decorated with gold blossoms and leaves outlined in black with touches of colour on a mustard ground. The doublures are decorated with scrolling gold flowers and leaves on a red ground and a dotted black narrow band. The central panels of the covers are very similar to the illumination of folios 18–22 and 207b–209a, which may suggest that they were also decorated by the illuminator of the Qur'an.
Single-volume Qur'an
Runnan (in the province of Isfahan), 14 Ramadan 1240 (1 May 1825)

Unlike most manuscripts, which were ordered or copied in important centres such as Shiraz and Isfahan, this small Qur'an was copied by an unrecorded scribe in a village near Isfahan, and was commissioned by someone resident in a nearby village, Farushan. The patron is otherwise unknown, but he titles, such as 'of high position, and pillar of the great and the noble', mark him as a local notable. This commission shows how widespread the practice of copying and illuminating manuscripts had become during the reign of Fath'ali Shah. Runnan was evidently a village with good scribes, since 'Abdullah ibn 'Ashur was also from there (cat.10).

The manuscript opens with a double page (folios 1b–2a) of gold-rule square panels, in which the title of each surah and, unusually, the page references are written. These are written alternately in black and red gold 'iqal on an uncoloured ground. This opening is followed by a double-page spread (folios 2b–3a) of illumination in gold, blue, green and cherry-red. The central panels contain gold lobed medallions and pendants in which the prayer to be read before commencing the Qur'an is written in red naskh. The field and the margins are illuminated with scrolling gold leaves outlined in black with touches of colour on an uncoloured ground. The main text starts on a double-page illuminated spread (folios 3b–4a), using a differently coloured ground to emphasize the decoration.

The text is written in small naskh (similar to cat.6 and 6a). Apart from catchwords on the'b' folios, the'a' folios are all numbered at the upper left corner (some cut, however, through trimming). Some of the numbers are written in a peculiar manner, such as 402 for 42, and 100204 for 124. Text divisions are in red 'iqal in illuminated devices, all with floral finials. Surah titles are also in red 'iqal written on plain gold cartouches, in illuminated panels. Each section ('ja'`) is marked by a spread with an illuminated undulating scroll between the 'ja'` and the 'kamand. These vary slightly in pattern, and in their use of colours or gold (folios 1b–11a, 7b–8a, 13b–16a). Traditions on the benefits of reciting each surah are written in the margins in Persian by the scribe of the main text in naskh (not a common practice, for they are usually written in shikastah) in vertical pointed cartouches. At the top left-hand corner of the 'a' folios in an illuminated quarto is written the title of the surah in red 'iqal (but they are left blank from folio 204 onwards). A similar device on the opposite page contains terms for shikastah, abbreviated or in full. The entire thirtieth 'ja'` (except for folios 21b–212a) is marked by fine gold foliate scrolls in the margins. The final two pages (folios 220b–221a), where the last two surahs, the colophon and prayers appear, have illuminated head-pieces in gold and polychrome, as well as marginal illuminations.

The colophon follows the surah al-Falaq (cxvii) (folio 220b), not, as usual, the surah al-Nás (cxiv), and states that the Qur'an was copied by the order of Haji Muhammad Kazim, the elder son of Haji Muhammad Riza, resident in the village of Farushan, and that the scribe was the eldest son of 'Ali Akbar, Husayn'ali, resident in the village of Runnan, and the date, 14 Ramadan 1240 (1 May 1825). Following the last surah (folio 221a) is a prayer. A note in Persian (folio 221b) with all the names erased records the fact that this Qur'an had been among the privately owned possessions of and that it was amicably arranged (sold) by consent in exchange for one ra'is (a letter or note) ... on Friday, 6 Ramadan 1288 (19 November 1871). A note on the opening page (folio 1a) reads: namlah ra'is 14 tahat shudah ast ('It has been registered as number 14'). The library to which this manuscript belonged is not named.

The lacquer covers bear flowers on a gold-sprinkled ground, bordered with a narrow band of undulating foliate scroll on a red ground. The doublets are the work of an illuminator and are decorated with delicate scrolling leaves and flowers in gold on a red ground, bordered with a narrow band of foliate scroll also in gold on a black ground.
Intricate as Shiraz, village near Isfahan, the patron is other- worldly and the noble’s practice of copying in the days of the Seljuk. Runnan was from there (cat. 108). Red square panels, written. These are The opening is red, blue, green and dains in which the field and the are touched with illuminated ornament.

From catchwords on the cut, however, folios, such as are gold devices, all with inls, in illuminated and in their use of text in naskh vertical pointed ed quaterfoil is folio 204 onwards. Abbreviated or in fine gold foliate the last two suras, and polychrome, usual, the surah niji Muhammad of Farashan, and the village of last sura (folio 19) records the fact and that it was ... on age (folio 18) reads: 4,4). The library to folio 15 with a narrow the work of an is in gold on a red black ground.
Single-volume Qur’an
Iran, probably Isfahan, AH 1282 (AD 1865–6)

This Qur’an, like many other 19th-century copies, opens with a double-page spread of illumination (folios 1b–2a). The central panels contain lobed medallions and pendants in which the prayer to be recited on commencing the Qur’an is written in red riqa’ on a plain gold ground. Corner-pieces are highlighted in polychrome, while the surrounding field is decorated with flowers and leaves in various shades of gold, outlined in black with touches of polychrome on an uncoloured ground. The outer borders of the jawzul are edged with gold tassels similar to those on cat. 69. The ka‘manud is ruled in red, gold and black.

The main text begins with a finely illuminated double-page spread (folios 2b–3a). The central panels bear the surah al-Fātiha (1) and the beginning of surah al-Baqara (2) in brilliant red frames. Two small panels above and below the text contain the surah titles written in gold riqa’ on lapsi-blue cartouches, set in illuminated panels. Text divisions are indicated in the margins on gold devices, most with illuminated finials in gold and polychrome. Catchwords are in naskh. Surah titles are in gold riqa’ on either red or lapsi-blue cartouches set in panels illuminated in polychrome and gold, up to folio 317b. Additional colours – yellow, green, pink – are used for the final chapters. A similar practice is to be seen in other Qajar Qur’ans, for example cat. 22. This is reminiscent of Safavid manuscripts illuminated at Isfahan.

Omissions are written in the margins, and are outlined in plain gold forming variously shaped devices, from tear-drops to vertical cartouches, depending on their length. A blank vertical cartouche (folio 268) at the beginning of surah Al ’Imran (3) may have been intended to include a tradition concerning the surah according to one of the Imams, as in other Iranian Qur’ans. An illuminated device at the top right-hand corner of the ‘b’ folio contains the abbreviated forms for sitkhānāb, while a similar device on the ‘a’ folios gives the title of the surah: these are all written in red riqa’ on a plain gold ground, edged with flame-like motifs and highlighted with polychrome. These markings are occasionally left blank (folio 255a, for example, and from folio 312a onwards).

Many of the instructions for surah headings or text divisions are still visible in a small informal hand. A note in red on folio 914 indicating juz’ 10 reads: bāyd sakhteb shawad (‘It should be made’). This note must have been added at the proof-reading stage when it was realized that the indication of the juz’ by marginal illumination had been wrongly inserted three folios earlier (folios 915b–915a).

A double-page spread of marginal illumination marks the beginning of each juz’. The illumination of these pages is mainly in various shades of gold with touches of polychrome. Two vertical cartouches in the margins are provided to house the illuminated devices and their finials. One device marks the juz’, and the other the indication ya Muhammad! (‘O Muhammad!’). The upper margins of these illuminated pages contain cartouches in red or lapsi-blue, outlined in, respectively, lapsi-blue and red. The inscriptions in these cartouches are written in gold riqa’, and read: Muhammad shud sipahsalar-i’a’zam (‘Muhammad became the Supreme Commander-in-Chief’).

The invitation to Muhammad must be a reference to the Prophet as well as to a Qajar Commander-in-Chief. It points to Mirza Muhammad Khan Qajar Davuloo, a cousin of ‘Abbas Mirza and father-in-law of two of Nasir al-Din Shah’s daughters, who was appointed Chief Bodyguard (sar-kebik bābā) and governor of Semnan and Daraghan in AH 1268 (AD 1851–2). He was sent to the south against the British in AH 1273 (AD 1865–7), appointed Commander-in-Chief (sipahsalar) in AH 1275 (AD 1868–9) and Supreme Commander-in-Chief (sipahsalar-i’a’zam) in AH 1280 or 1281 (AD 1865–4). He was appointed Prime Minister in AH 1281 (AD 1865), but dismissed in AH 1283 (AD 1866–7); he became Minister of War for a short period, and then was appointed deputy governor of Khurasan and the
A double-page spread of a page from a manuscript, featuring a large, ornate page design. The page is filled with text in red and black ink, with gold accents. The text is written in Arabic script, typical of early Islamic manuscripts. The layout includes a large, central illustration or cartouche, surrounded by smaller text blocks that may contain headings or notes. The page is bordered with intricate geometric patterns, common in Islamic art.
Superintendent of the Shrine in Mashhad (āstān-i qadā). His sudden death in AH 1284 (AD 1867), a few days after Nasir al-Din Shah's arrival in Mashhad, aroused rumours that he had been poisoned at the Shah's orders. He is said to have been ill-educated but religious, orderly and serious, and to have had indecipherable handwriting. The repetition of the note announcing the new title of Muhammad Khan as sipahsalar-i a'żam means that this copy of the Qur'an must have been commissioned to celebrate the event. Its date (AH 1282/AD 1865–6) indicates that it may have taken between one and two years to execute the commission.

The main text is followed by a short prayer followed by the colophon (folio 326b), both written in red riq'ā on a gold-speckled ground. The colophon begins with the phrase fa-ba'ud ("And then") written in gold and outlined in black, followed by the remaining text, which states that the manuscript was commissioned by Muhammad Ibrahim Khan and that it was copied by Muhammad Rahim Isfahani, son of Ghulam'ali, the calligrapher. It is difficult to identify the patron Muhammad Ibrahim Khan with certainty. The epigraphs given in the colophon are too imprecise to indicate a particular person. If he was an intimate of the Shah as indicated in the colophon, however, he may have been the brother-in-law of Nasir al-Din Shah, who was in charge of the construction of government buildings and had the title of Chief Architect (mīrār-bāshā). He was awarded the title of Khan in AH 1279 (AD 1862–3) and was later appointed governor of Tehran. He died in AH 1309 (AD 1891–2).

He is reported to have been illiterate, but shrewd. Very little is known of the scribe, Muhammad Rahim. His father, Ghulam'ali, son of Muhammad Rahim, is reported by Timad al-Saltanah to have been a 'world-famous' naskh scribe. He was also an excellent singer. He died in Isfahan in AH 1269 (AD 1852–3). On a visit to Isfahan, Fath 'Ali Shah commissioned Ghulam'ali to copy a Qur'an that he later endowed to the shrine of Imam 'Ali at Najaf. He had four daughters and one son, Muhammad Rahim, who was a naskh scribe and a pupil of his father. A Qur'an by him dated AH 1265 (AD 1856–7) was sold at Sotheby's, London. His other recorded works, in addition to the present Qur'an, included two commissioned copies of the Qur'an, one dated Rajab 1279 (December 1861–January 1862) and another dated AH 1288 (AD 1871–2). A Qur'an in the Salar Jung Library bears the signature of Muhammad Rahim ibn 'Ask Ghulam'ali known as khush-nasiri al-Isfahani, although the date of this Qur'an is given as AH 1290 (AD 1776), not AH 1290 (AD 1873–4). The description of the format, the paper and the illumination, however, all indicate similarities to cat.68. If so, this would be a fifth recorded Qur'an by Muhammad Rahim. All copies of the Qur'an were commissioned; they are in baghali size (approximately 6 by 4 centimetres), written in naskh-i khafig (small naskh) and similarly illuminated, especially the gold tassels edging the jadwal. Timad al-Saltanah records a Mirza 'Abd al-Rahim Isfahani as a well-known scribe who worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, charged with writing titles, names and addresses on envelopes. He died in Tehran in AH 1305 (AD 1887–8). If this Muhammad Rahim is the scribe of cat.68, it might explain why so little is known about him as a copyist.

The history of this fine miniature Qur'an is puzzling. The patron, if identified correctly, is described as illiterate, and the man who received the Qur'an as ill-educated. The portable format indicates that it was to be carried by the owner, in which case it may have been used more for its talismanic properties than for reading.

The covers are 19th-century lacquer, depicting flowers on a marqasb (gold-speckled) ground, bordered with a band of scrolling flowers and leaves in gold on a black ground. The doublures have been covered over with plain paper.
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69

Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, probably Isfahan, circa 1866

268 folios, 8.1 x 5 cm.

Material An extremely fine, cream, lightly burnished and glossy paper, potentially machine-made, but the largely indistinct mould markings make precise identification difficult. Due to the thinness of the paper and the quantity of sizing used in its production, folios are semi-transparent.

Text area 9.9 x 2.8 cm

Script Main text in naskh, with reading marks in rec; surah titles, marginal text divisions, sawdah and divination indications in red ruqa'.

Illumination Extensive decoration on folios 1b-22; text frame of narrow gold and red bands, black and gold rules, edged with gold tassels; outer frame of black and gold rules; text area sprinkled with gold; verses marked by plain gold discs; surah headings in panels; ornamental devices at the top right- or left-hand corner of each page; marginal devices marking text divisions, sawdah and divination indications.

Binding Contemporary lacquer

Accession no. 1997.134

Published Vermeul 1997, no. 21

The similarity of the paper, ruling, illumination and marginal devices of this Qur'an to cat. 68 shows that both were produced in the same workshop at very much the same date. The differences lie in the surah titles, which are written in red ruqa' on gold cartouches set in illuminated panels in gold and polychrome throughout (in cat. 68 they are in gold in variously coloured cartouches), the absence of the double-page illumination at the beginning of each juz' and the slightly less elaborate illumination for marginal devices.

The manuscript opens with surah al-Fatiha (1) and the beginning of surah al-Baqarah (2) on a double-page spread of fine illumination, with crenellation borders and with the text panels in brilliant red frames. The main text finishes without any additional prayers or colophon. The small illuminated devices in the upper corners mark the title of the surah on the 'a' folio and divination indications on the 'b' folio. The text divisions are marked by modestly illuminated devices in the margins.

The lacquered covers bear a bouquet of flowers on a maroon ground, bordered with a band of gold leaves on black. The doubleles depict flowering quince branches on a black ground, bordered with a band of gold leaves on black.
Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, AH 1316 (AD 1898–9)

228 folios, 7.4 x 4.3 cm, with 21 lines to the page. Material: A fine, off-white, burnished European machine-made paper.

Text area 5 x 2.4 cm

Script: Main text in naskh; prayers on folios 1b–2a, surah titles, marginal text divisions, sajdah markers and istikhabat indications in riqa'.

Scribe: Ibn Muhammad Husayn Muhammad'Ali

Illumination: Extensive decoration on folios 1b–3a, less extensive on folios 2b–2a; text frame of narrow gold band and black rules; outer frame of double black rules; verses marked by gold lozenges with diagonals and dots; interlinear gold patches throughout; gold tassels on folios 3b–4a; gold and pink tassels on folios 1b–2a; surah headings in panels, marginal ornamental devices marking text divisions, sajdah, surah headings and istikhabat indications.

Patron: Aqa Mirza Muhammad Mahdi

Documentation: Colophon.

Binding: Contemporary lacquer.

Accesion no: QC8.4.6.8


This small, neat copy of the Qur'an was ordered by a theologian of Gilan. It is of some interest in that hizb is omitted, and as demonstrating that by this date even a leading legal scholar might require istikhabat indications in the text.

The manuscript opens with a double-page spread of modest gold illumination (folios 1b–2a). The central panels contain vertical lobed cartouches bearing the prayer to be recited before commencing the Qur'an (folio 1b), and the prayers to be recited for istikhabat and sajdah (folio 2a) are written in alternate lines of black and pink in a mixture of naskh and riqa' . The field on which the cartouches are set is decorated with gold flowers and leaves outlined in black, with touches of colour. The central panel is bordered with tassel-like motifs, alternately in blue and pink.

The main text of the Qur'an starts with a double-page spread of dense illumination (folios 2b–3a) in gold, purplish-blue, green and red, bordered with a band of strapwork in gold and edged by blue tassel-like motifs. Gold tassels edge the inner frame of the following pages (folios 3b–4a). The entire text is written in small naskh, with interlinear gold patches. No reading instructions are given. Text divisions are limited to 'juz' (section) and 'ni'if (middle), and are often written in abbreviated form (for example, folio 172b, 124 for juz' 24).

These, together with the sajdah markers, are indicated in the margin in rather crudely illuminated devices with finials. Similar devices without finials are placed at the top, marking the title of the chapter on the 'a' folios and istikhabat indications on the 'b' folios. Surah titles are in red riqa' on plain gold cartouches, set in similarly crude illuminations in colours and gold. The main text is followed immediately by the colophon in riqa'.

The patron, Haji Muhammad Mahdi Gilani (AH 1272–1335/AD 1855–1916/7), known as Rahb al-'ulam', and later Sharit'utmadar ('Seat of the religious Law'), was the son of Haji Mulla Rafa'. At the time that al-Ma'thib was written (AH 1304/AD 1886–7), he had not yet been accorded the title of Sharit'utmadar, but I'timad al-Saltanah describes him as one of the most accomplished men of his time, universally honoured and outstanding among the notables of Gilan. The scribe, Muhammad 'Ali ibn Muhammad Husayn, is not recorded elsewhere.

The lacquered covers are decorated with bold arabesque scrolls of gold, outlined in red and brown, and filled with small flowers on a gold ground, set on a yellow field decorated with small gold scrolls outlined in black. A narrow black band of gold zigzag and leaf pattern borders the central panel. The red doublures are decorated with a linear bouquet at the centre, boxed in by rules and tassel-like motifs, and bordered with a similar band to the covers, all in gold. The spine is of coloured block-printed cloth. There is a similar book cover in the Collection, attributed to the mid-19th century.
It is of some interest that the prayer book is decorated with gold flowers in a mixture with gold paints. The illumination is of strapwork in the style of the following years. It is evident that the illuminations have been done in Egypt. The folios are rather crude, especially at the top, on the 'b' folios. The illuminations are rich in color and design. The book is signed with the date 916/7, known as the year of 'Abd al-Malik's death. He had described him as a poet and an outstanding artist. Had 'Abd al-Malik, who was a poet and an artist, outlined in yellow field decorated with gold zigzag and linear patterns, there is a similar design on the same folios.
The scroll opens with a fine illuminated head-piece in gold and polychrome, with a cypress or paisley figure on an uncoloured ground of dense spiral scrolls edged with serrated leaves. The figure is made up of concentric almond shapes, the outer one drooping to the right and the inner drooping to the left, and while the illumination is generally characteristic of Shiraz workshops of the early Qajar period, it is unusual in including a striped band more often used in textiles. The paisley motif has an elaborate hastate palmette base, set between half-hastae. It is placed in a panel bordered with chainwork, in black on gold, edged with narrow carmine bands. Below the paisley motif is a horizontal panel with gold cartouches on a lapis-blue ground, two of them bearing surah al-Fāṭihah (i) and the beginning of surah al-Baqarah (ii). The latter continues on a small cartouche in the chainwork border below. The remaining text of the surah then runs on to the red section of the elongated panel immediately below: the black sections of this panel bear the surah al-Baqarah, verses 47 onwards. Although the relation of the panels in carmine and in black is not invariably clear, the rule seems to be that the text runs in the central panel and then continues into the borders. The text, which is in naskh ghubār, is written in either red or black and is bordered by stencilled uncoloured bands creating variously shaped cartouches and paisley motifs. There are horizontal cartouches in the central panel in which inscriptions in carefully vocalized and pointed thulth are formed by being reserved against the inscribed ground (in a few places they are filled with text in red). In order to break the monotonous flow of the border text in black, red is used in the form of small cartouches or scrolling flowers and leaves reserved against uncoloured bands.

Close inspection of the decorative panels filled with text shows that their outlines must have been stencilled – and perhaps waxed – before the text was written, for their contours are remarkably sharp, even when they have not been strengthened in opaque white. The thulth inscriptions include the basmalah and prayers for the blessing of God upon The Fourteen Immaculates and some of the Companions of the Prophet, and end with the signature of the scribe, Khudā-Rahm al-Gurji (‘the Georgian’).

The main text runs right to the bottom of the left border and then continues at the bottom of the central panel. It is then followed by a prayer that runs on to the lower part of the left border, ending with the date, ‘the year 1206’ (AD 1791–2).

The absence of division markers, verse stops and surah headings in the text is a clear indication that the purpose of the scroll was amuletic, not for reading.
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Qur'an in vertical scroll format

Ottoman Turkey (or India), probably 18th century

78.0 x 6.4 cm; length of flap 14 cm
Material Main body of scroll a smooth, cream, lightly burnished paper; preliminary section, including illuminated panel, a crudely made, light brown paper, laid, with approximately six laid lines to the centimetre and no apparent chain lines or rib shadows
Script The opening spread in naskh; the main text in naskh, ghubār; longitudinal inscription panels in šubhāk
Illumination Decoration on the opening 'spread'; rectangular head-piece black and blue marginal rules; panels with interior divisions separated by thin gold lines; surah titles rubricated; juz' indicated in left-hand margin in red
Accession no. MSS 2

The head-piece, surah al-Fāṭiḥah (1) and the first part of surah al-Baqara (2) are written on paper pasted together from a number of thin strips. These come from flyleaves of manuscripts, most probably one from a Qur'an where prayers were written in a crude hand and the other with parts of a long Persian text beseeching the help of God. A strip of paper from a 15th-century Qur'an bearing a medallion and the word 'asih in gold ink was used in a subsequent restoration. The scroll is vertical and begins in a similar manner to a Qur'an in codex format, with the text of surah al-Fāṭiḥah (1) and the beginning of surah al-Baqara (2), both in rectangular panels with illuminated borders. The texts are written in clouds reserved against gold with hatching in red, bordered by bands of cartouches filled with scrolling flowers. The text of surah al-Fāṭiḥah is surmounted by an illuminated rectangular panel in a zigzag border of white on black, containing a blank central tabula on a ground of scrolling flowers. The rest of the text of surah al-Baqara continues in a different, rather careless hand.

The text is broken up into a series of panels with internal gold-ruled divisions and longer panels in the form of bold šubhāk inscriptions with gold outlines filled with the Qur'anic text, on an uncoloured ground sown with gold fleurons. The first of these is the istīlāḥa ('I take refuge in God from Satan the maleficent') and later inscriptions include the āyāt al-kursī (11, verse 255). The following inscriptions are written in uncoloured panels in red; the ṣabābād; surah al-Saff (21), part of verse 13; surah Yāsīn (111), part of verse 64; the ṣaḥāda 'āli quatrains; and, finally, 'The Book is finished'. The text concludes with a repeat of surah al-Fāṭiḥah (1).

The unnecessarily complex layout of this and other scrolls in the Collection hampers the reading of the Qur'anic text considerably, since the ordering of internal divisions is far from perspicuous, and although the text follows (more or less) the ducet of the inscriptions, it necessarily hops about and in some cases is written upside down. This almost wilfully confusing arrangement made it difficult for the scribe or scribes themselves to check the accuracy of the result. There are numerous small lacunae later in the surahs, and we may also suppose that scribal errors of other types are frequent.

Physically, this scroll differs from the others in the Collection in that it was first written in separate sheets with text blocks of different widths, which were then glued together. Variations in the script also suggest that it could have been the work of more than one scribe. As the lacunae demonstrate, editorial control over the copying cannot have been at all strict, nor was the finishing of the scroll. For, when the sections (juz') were added in red, instead of being numbered in sequence each one is marked as al-ṣaww al-thānī ('the second section').

The text is quite legibly written, but the vertical format, the layout of the scroll and the inclusion of various standard prayers for divine protection make it highly probable that it was amuletic in purpose. The hand is not Persian, even though the tenor of some of the prayers is Shi'i. It must therefore have been for Shi'i use, whether in Turkey or India, for both countries had substantial Shi'i minorities.
Qur’an in vertical scroll format
Iran, possibly Shiraz, dated AD 1268 (AH 1851–2)

The scroll opens with an illuminated head-piece (the flap is missing) in gold and polychrome, with a cypress or paisley motif on a gold ground with undulating floral scrolls. The figure is made up of concentric almond shapes drooping to the left. It has a hastate base, set between half-hastae. The head-piece is bordered with broad carmine bands outlined in bright green. Below is a horizontal panel with a blank gold cartouche with polychrome borders. Surah al-Fatiha (1) and the beginning of surah al-Baqara (2) are written obliquely in two elongated cartouches directly below, thinly outlined in gold ink. The head-piece is a somewhat simplified and more coarsely executed version of that of cat. 71.

The text is organized in panels filled with a lobed lozenge diaper alternating with oblong cartouches with pointed ends containing inscriptions in slender thulth reserved against the main text, carefully vocalized and pointed. The opening hasmalah and the first two cartouches of the central inscription were painted over in saffron colour. This text is in verse form and is an invocation to The Fourteen Immaculates, asking for the prayers to be accepted and the petitioner’s needs to be met. This text is in the plural and is often recited in groups, particularly by Sufi sects. It is then followed by the nada ‘ali quatrain. The scroll ends with a colophon: ‘The Glorious Qur’an was completed with the help of the Praised King, in the year 1268’ (AD 1851–2).

As with cat. 71, close inspection shows that the outlines of the text panels must have been stencilled — and perhaps waxed — before the text was written, for their contours are remarkably sharp, even when they have not been strengthened in opaque white or saffron. Also as in cat. 71, the absence of division markers in the text and of verse stops and surah headings is a clear indication that the purpose of the scroll was amuletic, not for reading.
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Fragmentary Qur'an in horizontal scroll format
Probably India, 18th or 19th century

As in the vertical scrolls, the paper strips of which this horizontal scroll is made up would generally have been glued one to the other before it was written. The very sharp contours of the inscription also suggest that some form of stencil was used. The text is arranged in the form of the āyat al-kurā from surah al-Baqara (21, verse 255). The bismālah and the word Allāh at the beginning of the verse and the words from 'înā bihi illā (a) to the end of it are, however, missing, with the consequence that the texts of surah al-Fatihah (1) and surah al-Baqara up to the middle of verse 27 at the beginning and of surah al-Iḥsā' (112) to the end have been lost. In its present state, therefore, the scroll terminates with the end of surah al-Mujaddalāb (110). In addition to the text losses, the scroll shows many traces of water damage.

The only text markings are hizb divisions, which are marked by writing the beginning of the hizb in a bold hand. These, and the fact that it can be unrolled as a hand-scroll from right to left, suggest that, whether or not it was carried as an amulet, this Qur'an was also intended to be read.

The attribution of this scroll to the Indian sub-continent is corroborated by a scroll of horizontal format with the Qur'anic text, also in the form of a long inscription, in a similar ductus sold at Sotheby's, attributed to 19th-century India.¹
...is made up of the very sharp edges. The text is from 'ilmiki texts of surah beginning and of text losses, the scroll showing the beginning of a hand-scroll from the Qur'an was also identified by a scroll description, in a...
Concordance by

CAT.1 QU.R 11
CAT.2 QU.R 11
CAT.3 QU.R 11
CAT.4 QU.R 22
CAT.5 QU.R 31
CAT.6 QU.R 4
CAT.7 QU.R 23
CAT.8 QU.R 71
CAT.9 QU.R 71
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CAT.11 QU.R 9
CAT.12 QU.R 9
CAT.13 QU.R 9
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CAT.48 QU.R 9
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