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THE NASSER D. KHALILI COLLECTION OF ISLAMIC ART

VOLUME V
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THE CALLIGRAPHIC ART OF ISLAM
Calligraphy in Islamic Art

by Nabih Khatib
with a contribution by

The Arabic inscription says: 'There is no god but Allah, Allah is Great, there is no partner for Allah.'
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Publisher’s note

In this catalogue, the spelling of Arabic and Persian personal
names follows the 1988 system of Arabic transliteration,
but full orthographic marks are given only when the names
occur as part of a direct quotation from either language.

For Persian names, the letter š is used instead of š to give,
for example, Vizial rather than Vīsāl. The al- in compound
names is always written as al-, as in ‘Abd al-Rahman.
The Arabic definite article is not given in Persian names
unless it occurs in text which is being directly quoted;
thus we write Mīr ‘Alī Hārānī, not Mīr ‘Alī al-Hārānī.

In certain cases, however, where the name of a person is
unknown apart from an Arabic version, the al- is retained,
as in Shams al-Dīn al-Kātib al-Shirāzī.

Ottoman names are given according to modern Turkish
spelling and the Arabic definite article is retained only for
direct quotations: for example, Khalil Shukri al-Naqshbandi
appears as Hālik Şükri Nakhḫbendi. Other words used in
a predominantly Ottoman context are also given in
their modern Turkish forms.
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Foreword

The art of Islamic calligraphy has always been one of my great interests. Over the past 25 years I have tried to assemble a representative selection of examples of calligraphy from the time of Yaqut al-Musta'imi, who died in 1298, onwards. I have been fortunate enough to acquire works by many of the major Ottoman and Iranian calligraphers of the last 800 years, as well as examples by less well-known practitioners, and I believe that this material provides a comprehensive survey of most of the major developments which have occurred in the practice of calligraphy down to the 20th century.

To keep the present volume at a practical size, it was decided not to include material that is being published in the seven volumes devoted to Qur'anic and non-Qur'anic manuscripts. Above all, this book is designed to emphasize the development of calligraphy as a traditional discipline, and its manifestations as an art form in its own right. We have therefore selected works that illustrate, on the one hand, the chain of transmission from master to pupil through the process of training and practice; and, on the other, works that were produced for display in albums or in monumental settings.

In addition to the usual forms of Islamic calligraphy in the six classical scripts, I have endeavoured to assemble material which illustrates the fullest range of calligraphic activity, and this catalogue includes examples of décoration, "golden" leaves and miniaturized scripts. The inclusion of copies of the Ḥadīth seems fully justified by the important role they have played in the work particularly of Ottoman masters.

I am grateful above all to Dr Nabil Safwat for cataloguing the calligraphy collection, and for his valuable commentary. In following the suggestion of the General Editor to structure the book according to calligraphic genres, and to emphasize those elements that bear on training and practice, he has, I believe, produced more than a catalogue. This unique arrangement of the material tells the story of Islamic calligraphy from the point of view of the practitioner of the art, rather than that of the Western art historian.

As with almost all of the volumes in this series, however, not every item in the Collection could be included. There are, for instance, 17 works signed by the 19th-century Iranian calligrapher Ghulam Riza (see cat.17), which I hope will provide other scholars with material for future research. One group that I did wish to see included here relates to the tradition of nastāb in Safavid and Qajar Iran. Though of central importance to the writing of the Qur'an its role in independent calligraphy is often ignored. As this material falls outside Dr Safwat's interests, the essay and accompanying entries have been compiled by the General Editor and included as Appendix 2.

Dr Safwat has asked me to thank on his behalf Uğur Derman, Hasan Çelebi, Mohamed Zakariya and Muammer Ulker for their often invaluable advice during the preparation of this volume. My thanks are also due to Mohamed Zakariya for supplying the examples of the different forms of Arabic script seen in Appendix 2.

I should like to express my gratitude to Christopher Phillips for his photography; to the late Don Baker, who restored several of the works reproduced here; to Manijeh Bayani for translating the Persian inscriptions; and especially to Nahla Nassar, the assistant curator of the Khalili Collection, for her help with all aspects of the cataloguing; to Wendy Kelan and Sally Chancellor for invaluable administrative assistance; and to the team at Azimuth Editions, Dr Julian Raby, Tim Stanley, Alison Effemy and Kate Bosher. As with the previous volumes, the design was the work of Anist Associates and production was supervised by Lorna Raby.

Nasser D. Khalili
London 1995
Introduction

Language is humanity’s unique achievement – indeed, language is the quintessence of what it is that makes us human. Each mother tongue teaches its users a singular way of experiencing the world, and acting in it, and for this reason language is rightly held to be humanity’s richest art form. The Arabic language has been inseparably linked, since the life of the Prophet Muhammad, with the religion of Islam. The Qur’an, the holy book of Islam, originated in divine revelation transmitted to the Prophet, and was communicated orally by him to his early followers. But from the time when the Qur’an was first written down, it played a central role in the development and evolution of Arabic script. From this interrelationship between the sacred text of the Qur’an and the activity of writing Arabic, writing came to be considered as having divine intention. Calligraphy became, and has remained, the most revered and highly regarded art form in the Islamic world.

To Muslims, calligraphy represents the literary heritage of the Arabic language and the emotive aspect of the religion of Islam harnessed together into an artistic tradition that has evolved, through the successive efforts of generations of scribes, into an art form of extraordinary beauty, richness and power. It follows that calligraphy does not reveal its charms lightly to the casual observer. The appreciation of calligraphy demands a trained eye and sensitivity to the rich cultural background – linguistic, religious and historical – from which it springs. In particular, the reverence felt towards writing in Islamic culture must always be borne in mind.

Calligraphy is an extremely demanding activity, and most of the great Muslim masters devoted their lives to perfecting their art. Furthermore, mastery of calligraphy required not only the discipline of developing technical skill, but the engagement of the calligrapher’s moral force and personality. This is well conveyed in the monumental work on the lives of Ottoman calligraphers, the Tuhfe-i Hattattin, written in 1759 by Mürşidzade Süleyman Sadeddin Efendi (d. 1787), a calligrapher and author who spent his own lifetime in the study of his art.¹ Mürşidzade writes with simple, unpretentious scholarship, free from jargon, and with remarkable clarity; the sympathetic manner in which he integrates anecdotes, poems and biographical detail into a comprehensive history of Islamic calligraphy makes him an Ottoman Vasari, as it were. More importantly, he portrays calligraphy as the highest use of man’s mental, physical and moral faculties. In his discussion of the attributes of the calligrapher he reminds us that the true calligrapher should be a person of impeccable morals, and that calligraphy itself is a moral medium. Almost all the uses to which calligraphy is put in the Muslim world convey some moral value. Unfortunately, modern scholarship is often unwilling to give serious regard to this characteristic, a shortcoming which has inhibited the formation of a unified picture of that calligraphic culture so well represented by Mürşidzade.

A particularly valuable aspect of Mürşidzade’s work is the light that it casts on the relationship between pupil and teacher, which was a vital aspect in the development and transmission of the calligraphic tradition. Mürşidzade thus includes a study of his own teacher, the great Hoca Mehmed Rasin (d. 1755),² throughout which he emphasizes the essential relationship between discipline and method.

The formulation of method, by which we mean both the technical and creative processes through which the letters are formed, played a decisive part in the development of calligraphy. This is expressed in an exemplary saying attributed to ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib that appears in numerous albums of calligraphy: ‘The art of calligraphy is hidden in the teaching [method] of the master.’ The role of the teacher was pivotal within a well-established curriculum and a teaching method tested, verified and perfected by a system of personal transmission from master to pupil that stretches back more than 1,000 years.

¹
does provide other useful items in the book which have included reproductions of key works of central importance. He is often accompanied by notesとなった

²
doesn’t doesn’t
The teacher did not look for calligraphic ability alone in a pupil: he looked for a capacity to learn. Learning how to allow the teacher to transmit his knowledge was, in turn, essential for the student. Each stage had to be completed perfectly before the next could be started. The importance of learning how to begin to learn is illustrated by the early career of the great Mahmud Celâlîdin (d. 1829), whose request to study under them was refused by two teachers of the time, not for his lack of ability, but on account of his unwillingness to go through the established protocol: he was too eager, snobbish and overbearing. Consequently he was practically self-taught, something very rare in the history of Islamic calligraphy. Ordinarily, the bond between master and pupil would last a lifetime. When Mehmêd Şevki Efendi (d. 1887) was advised by his teacher Mehmêd Hulusî to transfer to another master, on the basis that he, Hulusî, had taught him all he knew, Şevki refused, and vowed never to study with anyone else. The pupil–teacher relationship, at its best, was one of reverence and discipline. Through it, the pupil became part of a long chain of calligraphic transmission stretching back to the masters of the past, Şeyh Hamdullah, Yağut al-Mustasîninî, Ibn al-Bawwab and Ibn Muqâlah. But the relationship could vary according to the temperament and approach of the master. Despite his fame, Hafiz Osman (d. 1698) seems to have had a relatively casual approach, teaching two nights a week and on Sundays giving lessons to the poor. Although he taught the Ottoman princes, he would sit down on the street corner and help a student who had missed his class with his masâhîq exercise. On the other hand, some masters were not easily approachable. Abdullah Amâsi is said to have spent most of his time in a cellar, communicating with his students through a trapdoor.

The concept of the bestowal of barakâh ("gracious providence") by a master on a pupil is perhaps difficult for us to understand today, and traditionally discussion of it was discouraged. But it was a factor of undeniable importance, as an extract from Müstakîm-zade’s work conveys. In it he relates how a pupil could obtain barakâh from the soul of a dead master: ‘He who seeks calligraphic excellence, before beginning the writing exercise,’ must inwardly seek gracious providence from the soul of the master by first reciting al-fatîhah. Then he should review the masâhîq examples assigned to him by his own teacher, which are in his possession. Then he may begin writing. Soon he will attain and develop, both inwardly and visibly, with goodness and blessing. For this has been tried. Also, one may cut a new pen by shaving it, slitting the tip, and cutting it off at the correct angle for thuluth script; and another for naskh script. This [new pen] may be wrapped in a sheet of paper and with prayers, blessings and exaltations it should be buried in the ground at a depth of about two fingers, near the grave of the master. This should be done on a Friday night and kept for a week. Then it should be dug out at the same time as the burial. At the outset, the student should write only one line of tamâshahîq exercise with this pen; this is for the purpose of acquiring the blessing of the master. Then he may resume writing his masâhîq and study with another pen; we have seen evidence of the effectiveness of this practice in producing beautifully perfected results. May God be pleased... We see here, in its most extreme form, the reverence attached to the pupil–teacher relationship expressed as ritual or symbol.

We must always remember that calligraphy was an activity, not a body of doctrine. In his training, the calligrapher went through many stages and acquired many skills. Among these, none was more important than the trimming of the nib, nor was any activity surrounded by more professional mystique. In the words of Ibn al-Rumi (d. 897): 9

9. Müstakîm-zade, 10. Muqâlah, 11. Arabic, muqâlah, 12. This ceremony, the practice of training the pen to resemble the master’s, seems to improve it in its form.


11. Arabic, muqâlah; 12. Arabic, muqâlah; 13. For work by Ibn al-Bawwab, see vol. 13. 14. See cat. 12. 15. For instance, see cat. 12. 16. This ceremony, the practice of training the pen to resemble the master’s, seems to improve it in its form.
Introduction

Trimming the nib was only to be undertaken by the truly initiated. Since the cutting of the pen determined the style of the script, it was one of the calligrapher’s fundamental ‘trade secrets’. In Ibn al-Bawwab’s famous poem on calligraphy, the ‘Ode on the Art of Calligraphy’ or Ra’iyyah, in which each line ends in the letter ra’, he tells us categorically:

As for the technique of trimming the nib,
Do not be greedy!
I will not reveal its nuances; I withhold its secrets.

The 13th-century Syrian calligrapher Ibn al-Wahid’s commentary on the poem says, ‘The reason why the Shaykh was so reticent to explain this, was that he did not want others to know it: apart from those to whom he wished to impart the code which was necessary to decipher the wisdom behind the symbolic language. This is in accordance with the custom of the wise in preserving their secrets from the ignorant, by adopting symbolic terminology.’

However, there is more to these lines than first appears. In his provocative statement Ibn al-Bawwab was making the ultimate gesture of generosity by means of a simple psychological device; stimulating the student’s interest and effort by denying him knowledge.

For the Muslim calligrapher, method, discipline and reverence were fused to form an artistic and instructional way of life that is difficult to parallel. The productions of this training have two distinct aspects, meaning and effect, the first being a function of the words written, the second a function of the calligraphy in which they are written. These may vary in intrinsic excellence, but, when successfully integrated, they constitute the true power of Muslim calligraphy.

In what follows, I have concerned myself with drawing a comprehensive picture of the discipline from the perspective of the calligrapher, as much as from that of the patron or collector. Rather than treat the examples in the Khalili Collection by geographical area and historical period, I have organized the catalogue by theme and category, concentrating on those which seem to be either little known or neglected in the West.

The first part of the catalogue deals with the training of a calligrapher and consist of examples of mufradât, calligraphic exercise books, karâdatims or practice sheets, and ijziyâr or certificates of proficiency. The following part deals with the preservation and presentation of calligraphic works, ranging from sometimes small excerpts, assembled into albums of musâqa’ât, to leihâs, monumental compositions intended for display in mosques or other buildings. These compositions include both freehand examples and those produced by pouncing, and the section also deals with hîyâs, calligraphic descriptions of the Prophet. The final part treats more specialized areas of calligraphy: the ghubâr or miniaturized scripts, décompagné or paper cut-outs, and the art of gilding leaves.
The term *mufradāt* comes from the Arabic root *f-r-d*, which conveys the idea of singularity. *Mufradāt* are therefore the individual letters of the Arabic alphabet, written in sequence as an exemplar. In the course of time, however, the term has also come to be applied to the letters of the alphabet written in composite form since, in albums of *mufradāt*, both the independent and combined forms of the letters are written out. Each of the 29 characters used to write the 29 different sounds of Arabic is combined with the remaining 16 in succession, thus dealing with all possible letter combinations. The exercises of single and combined letters were, at least under the Ottomans, usually arranged in albums of horizontal format, with three or four lines of *tahlīb* to the page. The pages were normally mounted on board and bound with the spine running along the upper horizontal edge. Ottoman examples of *mufradāt* albums in a vertical format do, however, exist, as cat. 3 demonstrates.

The textual content of these albums is almost always the same. They begin with a *has-balab* and one or more short prayers. Next come the letters of the alphabet shown in their independent forms, the *barrif al-mufradāt* (see, for example, cat. 7 and 8). After these come the characters in combination, referred to simply as the *barrif*. The upper and lower lines on each page are written in *tahlīb* and the intervening line, or lines, in *nasāb*. Wherever a character may be written in more than one way, all the different forms are shown. The letter *sin*, for example, may be written with or without its three "teeth", as in cat. 1; the terminal form of the letter *yā* may be written as a sub-linear curve or bent back in its "retrograde" form.

The text in the album continues with composite letters, one letter being paired in succession with others, as shown in cat. 9. At the end of this section, the calligrapher writes, in *tahlīb*, 'The letters [al-*barrif*] have been completed, with the help of God, the King, the Compassionate ...', as in cat. 12, folio 10a. The final pages usually end with a *qasidah*, an Arabic poem, or with a familiar prayer in *tahlīb*, praising God and exalting His name, as in cat. 10 and 11. The poem and prayers are technically referred to as the *murakkabāt*, from the Arabic root *r-k-b*, which conveys the idea of assembling, or fitting together.

On each page the central panel of *nasāb* is flanked by rectangular side panels, sometimes called *kolonaks*, because their shape resembles that of an armchair (in Turkish, *kolonak*). Such panels are often decorated but can also be used to carry words that cannot be fitted into the main panels of text. In some examples, such as cat. 12, we find the *aljād* placed between the exercises and the final prayer and colophon. Here, the letters of the alphabet are arranged according to ascending numerical order and written as a mnemonic list formed from the names of the letters, which are vocalized to make pronunciation possible: *aljād, hawwāz, ḫustun* and so forth.

The prayers and sayings that appear in these albums were chosen from a relatively small repertoire. The opening prayers ask for God's favour and help in completion of the task undertaken ('Lord, help to make things easy, rather than difficult; Lord we seek Your help' for a happy, munificent conclusion'); the closing ones, in a declaration of gratitude, celebrate His name and frequently call down blessings upon the Prophet. The sayings stress the importance of the relationship between master and pupil. Perhaps the most popular is one attributed to 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, who was regarded as the first master of the art: 'Calligraphy is concealed in the teaching method of the master; its essence is in its frequent repetition and it exists to serve Islam.' This can be taken to mean that mere copying without the directing presence of the master is futile. Hence the saying of Sufi calligraphers, 'The self-taught man is one taught by a very ignorant person.'

The process of learning and memorizing the individual letters was often done by making reference to shapes like the eyebrow, the mouth, and the lovelock, which were commonly
used metaphors in Islamic poetry. Thus, the recognition and mastering of the correct letter-forms was not only a practical exercise for the student of calligraphy, but also a general lesson in aesthetics.

It is important to realize that these albums are not merely exercise books, though they originated as such and continued to serve as exemplars for those studying calligraphy. Although simple in appearance, they embody the experience of countless generations. They are a concept as well as a tool. Through them, the unseen world of calligraphy, the 'scripts of the world of dreams', to quote the 15th-century Ottoman master, Mehmed Şevki, is rendered visible. The mufradat albums give physical form to a chain of transmission which stretches from earliest times to the present, and provide a tangible summation of the observations of calligraphers and writers on calligraphy alike.

For example, the use of an elongated ligature after the letter sin in the basmalah was at first rarely used, but, as the mufradat albums show, it soon became an accepted convention. This elongation improves the aesthetic balance of the phrase, and even helps to indicate how it should be enunciated. The introduction of ligatures provided greater flexibility in the spacing of individual words and the overall line, so that a word which would appear awkward if written at the end of a line could be made to appear at the beginning of the following line.

It is not clear when Ottoman mufradat albums adopted the horizontal format which had become commonplace by the 19th century. That it goes back to at least the 17th century is suggested by a copy made in 1784 of a 17th-century album by Hafiz Osman, cat. 3. Not only is the presentation of the letters, both single and composite, identical to that found in 19th-century Ottoman mufradat albums, but the same calligraphic compositions are used for some of the prayers.

Mufradat albums were carefully studied, and also produced, by aspiring calligraphers like Abdülhakk, who wrote cat. 6. But, as cat 8 and examples in other collections indicate, mufradat albums were also compiled by masters who were at the height of their careers. The inference must be that those who produced them considered themselves to be in a continual process of learning. Thus, accomplished masters would sign their albums using expressions like satuwaqa, nazala or yamamqa, implying 'to copy out', rather than kataba, 'to write', which Ottoman calligraphers at least were only entitled to use after they had received their licence to practice (tâzâdah) from a master.3 These manuscripts therefore testify to both the skill of the master and his continual search for perfection.
1. Msfradat fragment attributed to Yaqut al-Musta’si (Possibly Baghdad, 13th century)

2. Page from a msfradat album with a signature in the name of Yaqut al-Musta’si (Possibly Baghdad, dated 1383/1212-1213), decorated with a border in greenish-aquamarine pigment and gold floral decoration on a gold and coloured rule. Accession no. CAI.212.6

This is a single line from an album of msfradat. It shows the letter ʾāyn in combination with seven other letters in alphabetical sequence. The letter ʾāyn is governed by the same rules whether it is written singly or in combination. In the first case, al-Qadghahi tells us, the final loop has an affinity with the sub-linear form of the letter mim. The form of the letter used in the fourth segment of this line of script is the so-called al-muṣallāgh, or ‘suspended’ mim. It consists of one long sweeping stroke without the small ‘bend’ which are characteristic of this letter. According to al-Qadghahi, this particular form of the ʾāyn can only be used as the first part of any combination of letter forms (al-muṣfradat al-9ub).

Five letters, each with three seal impressions appear on the verso, claiming to authenticate the hand as that of Yaqut al-Musta’si (d. 1329). The letter ʾāyn is signed by ʿAbd al-Dżafar b. Surayj bin al-Molk, Prince Regent of the Qaimshū, another by ʿAbdurrahim known as al-ḵalīf al-maṣfira ʾāyn), and another by ʿAbdurrahim known as al-ḵalīf al-maṣfira ʾāyn). Although all these signatures were written at the beginning of the 13th century, the construction of the paper suggests an early date consistent with the attribution.

3. Msfradat album signed by Derviş Mehmed (Ottoman Turkey, dated 1685/1676-1677

This album is reminiscent of the work of Derviş Mehmed’s master, Ahmed Karashia, in terms of its layout, energy and character. The forms of the letters, their mode of arrangement and the use of space all bear comparison to Karashia’s work. Derviş Mehmed’s contribution is his use, unusual in a msfradat album, of a gold scrip with fine black outlines and, above all, the manner in which he has occasionally linked one pair of letters with the pair that follows. A striking example occurs in the last half of the central line on folio 39, where four pairs of letters are connected as if in one continuous stroke. Despite these elaborate ligatures, the clarity of each letter form is preserved.

The original pages have been framed relative to the position of the paper. The folios are not pasted down, so that the original recto and verso sides can be seen.

The closing page, folio 72, begins with a baṣmala in gold ʾūdī. A prayer is written in black naskh above and below the om al-baṣmala, and its text continues below in lines of gold ʾūdī; it differs from the usual formula found in Ottoman msfradat albums of the 16th and 17th centuries. In the fifth and final panel another prayer is written in dogmas lines of ʾūdī and ends with the colophon naming Derviş Mehmed and giving the date, 1685/1676-7.

Published Geneva 1995, cat. 165

1. Msfradat-zvi 1938, p. 173; Rado, no date, p.79.
2. From the Arabic word ʾākūn (‘return’). The order was founded by ʿUmar al-Khâwâsi in the 14th century. Its headquarters were moved from Shamakhi to Baku and then, in 1460, to Amasya.
3. For an example of Karashia’s own msfradat exercises, see Rado, no date, p.71, fig.5.
now in three
features from
the 15th and 19th
h and final panel
written in diagonal
ads with the
harsh Muhammad
64 (AD 1576–7).

According to the
art as master,
morein terms of its lay-
outs. The forms
words of a seal-age,
all bear com-
ponent form a work. 

Many are his use,
its album, of a gold
on which he has
four lines of letters
Italian. A striking
in each half of the
words where four
connected ex in
like. Despite these
the clarity of such
red.

have been framed
within borders
excellent quality,
spread out, so that
evoked in places can

see Rado, no date,
Mafrajdat album
Ottoman Turkey, 16th century

At the bottom of several pages there are inscriptions in siyyašt (Turkish, siyekat), another distinctive form of script used in the Ottoman Chancery. The horizontal strokes are drawn out and often terminate in stop-form serifs. Some of these folios bear the date 1081/12 (AD 1676).

In the 16th century, this manuscript was used by a tutor to give simple lessons in mathematics, perhaps to members of the sultan's family. The instruction was careful and detailed, and seems to have been intended for adolescents. It consists of routine exercises in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, including long division. There are several different hands; some calculations contain errors, suggesting the work of a pupil, while others give the final answer with no intermediate working-out, and were probably written by the tutor. Folio 14 bears a date, 1081/12 (AD 1671), which may have been the year in which the mathematical calculations were made.

2. For example, see Dorman 1990, pl. 126-6. Not all mafrajdat have this mark, because many are written by established masters.
3. I would like to thank Professor N.H. Bingham for his assistance in interpreting the mathematical calculations.

23 folio, 10.1 x 24.7 cm (fols. 1-23); 1 line to the page, written in divan and siyyašt in black ink, occasionally with ground ink or mother-of-pearl, spotted with gold, on heavy, polished, cream paper, 4.8 x 27.4 cm, laid with 10 lines to the centimetre. There are division lines every 3, 5 centimetres. The binding is modern. Accession no. 108234
Published: Geneva 1993, cat. 211

This collection was probably written in one of the administrative departments of the Ottoman Court. The quality of the paper is excellent and gold is used throughout. The script is divan (Turkish, divan), which was the hand employed by Ottoman government scribes for writing official documents. It is not an easy script to read, its general characteristic being a sweeping movement from the right, the curved line of script rising towards the left. Gold discs above the lines emphasize this curve. Divan evolved from the ta'lif script, which was itself a development of the cursive script.

The collection is not signed but each page has the sweeping notation "as" (literally, 'no end'), 'as' ('to strive'), which in this context implies 'will done', or 'work'. This seems to indicate that the work was that of a student. Above each frame appears the word "bula" ("He"), meaning God.

22.3 x 15.2 cm, written in black, red, and lightly polished gold to the large flower in blue, brown and gold. Accession no. 108234

This page in vertical section, containing the beginning of a second or third transcribed copy of the same text in red ink marks the end of the section dealing with mathematics.

Fine red ink flanks each page, the centre margin being left for the scribe's name. While the borders are decorated with floral designs, the centre is occupied by a large painted floral design, possibly a copy of the seal of the Sultan. This may have been the year in which the mathematical calculations were made.
Page from a *masfrudat* album

Probably Ottoman, Turkey, 16th century

22.2 × 15.2 cm (original); 7 lines to the page, written in *shubh* and *naskh* in black, red and blue ink on cream, lightly polished paper, laid with 6–8 lines to the centimetre, painted with a large floral scroll in gold. Illumination in blue, black and gold pigment.

Accession no. 126.67

This page from an album of *masfrudat* in vertical format contains part of the section dealing with the letter *he* in combination with other letters and the beginning of the section on the letter *jeem*. It must, therefore, have been the second or third page of the original manuscript.

The script in the four large panels is *shubh*, that in the smaller ones *naskh*. The end of the section dealing with *he* is marked by the inscription of that letter in blue, located in the middle of the second panel of *naskh*. The inscription in red in the third panel of *shubh* marks the beginning of the section dealing with the letter *jeem*.

Five ornamental bands in blue and gold flank each of the panels of *naskh* in the centre these consist of gold palmettes and blue and gold floral scrolls, while the upper and lower panels are decorated with floral scrolls alone. Ornament of this type is typical of mid-16th-century Ottoman work.
Fragmentary masra'āt album signed by Abdülhäki
Ottoman Turkey, 17th–18th century

The text in this album is arranged in the typical Ottoman tripartite format, the first, second and third panels containing letters written in a large tdhâbat, the second panel letters in a smaller naskh. Each line of text is enclosed by a cloud cartouche on a gold ground, and the central panel on each page is flanked by colourful side panels bearing somewhat crudely executed, white, T-shaped cloud bands over red and gold floral motifs on a blue ground.

In addition to examples of single and combined letters, there is an invocation asking God and the Prophet for protection and thanking the Prophet and his family, incorporating the tadrîṣ: “Seek God’s protection from laziness and stagnation. Out of esteem for him whom was revealed the Qur’an, Sayyid, son of ‘Abdun, Muhammad, May God bless him and grant him salvation—the people of generosity and beneficence (folios 12a, 14a, 15a). The combined letters finish with the customary short rhyme: ‘The letters were completed with the help of God, the King, the Compassionate’ (Folios 15a, 19a).”

The album has been signed on the last of the surviving pages, in the left side panel, by an unidentified scribe, Abdülhäki. He was perhaps still a student when he executed this album, for the hand is at times awkward. In addition, the phrase he uses in the colophon (mashqah) suggests that he was practising an exercise.

1. The usual eulogy after the name of the Prophet, ‘May God bless him and grant him salvation’ (ṣallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam).

2. The text is incomplete: the first page is missing, and, as the section dealing with the letter ‘a’ is incomplete, the final page is probably also lost.

3. See the discussion of cat. 9, below.

This unsigned album is noteworthy for its contents as well as for the quality of its script and decoration. In addition to the usual examples of letters, presented singly and in combination, it contains an Arabic poem in praise of the Prophet which gives some of his physical characteristics and personal qualities (folios 10a–12a).

The text continues with an illuminated basmalah in tadhâbat. Below the opening panel are two lines of naskh, the upper one being another basmalah and the lower one an apostrophe praising God as the dispenser of all success. This panel is also finely illuminated, but in a different style. The text is written inside cloud cartouches set against a gold ground that has been stippled with a repeating treble-dot motif, and bears floral scroll. Exercises and verses are separated by floral medallions and, occasionally, by six-pointed stars.

The exercises continue until folio 9b, where they are followed by the usual prayers and invocations and the abjad in both varieties of script. The central panel of naskh on folio 10a contains the beginning of the saying in praise of calligraphy attributed to ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib.” This occurs in the central panel on folio 9b, while the standard invocation glorifying the name of God is written in the upper and lower panels. The poem in praise of the Prophet begins on folio 12a; it is presented in the same form as the panels containing the exercises, and has identical decoration. There is no colophon, merely a statement on folio 12a marking the completion of the poem.

1. Compare the binding of cat. 12.

2. For these prayers and sayings, see p. 12, above.
Mafradāt album signed by Mehmed Vafi, after an original by Hafiz Osman Ottoman Turkey, dated AH 1509 (AD 1784–5)

20 folios, 10 x 15.5 cm (within black rule); 4 lines to the page, written in black ink in shorthand, masbaqqāt, nakhlī and rigāf in black ink on lightly polished, yellow laid paper. Illumination in opaque watercolour, gold pigment and ink. Mounted on board edged with leather, 16 x 23.7 cm, decorated with coloured, gold-spinkled grounds, the central spread of marbled paper. Binding in maroon morocco leather with gold tooling; doublelts of marbled paper. Accession no. 180533

This album was copied by one of the most prolific and important Ottoman calligraphers of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Mehmed Vafi. It is a beautifully composed example of "exemplary" writing (masāfi), executed after an original by Hafiz Osman. Mehmed Vafi (d. 1817), was known as "Iqba‘i-zade Haci Hafiz". He is credited with the production of some 230 albums of calligraphy, 370 calligraphic panels (Revahs), 256 bayıhs, 1,370 prayerbooks, 20 copies of the Qur'an, 5 copies of the Kutub al-Shifa' and 150 copies of the Dala'il al-Khayrat, an enormous body of work by any standards. He practised his masāfi under the guidance of Ebubeke Rajid Eliendi and his own pupils included the reforming sultan, Mahmud II (r. 1808–39), who was one of the finest royal practitioners of the art of calligraphy (see cat. 90–91). Mehmed Vafi was renowned as a master of "jali" writing, the production of large-scale compositions in shorthand and masbaqqa. He came to work in the imperial palace and henceforth used the title Kutub al-ṣawwāz al-watāb, "scribe of the royal palace". It is worth noting that Mehmed Vafi produced six albums some 17 years after obtaining his licence to practice, further evidence that albums of mafradat cannot be considered as mere exercise books for student calligraphers and that a licensed master would still take pride in copying the work of an illustrious predecessor. The album begins with a magnificent baṣmāda in masbaqqa, in which the lack of an elongated ligature between šīn and waw contrasts markedly with the rendering of the baṣmāda in shorthand seen, for example, in cat. 7. The panel below this contains a prayer, in masāf: 'I am God, make me likable in the hearts of the believers; make me reach the age of one hundred and twenty; God is the Best Guardian and He is the Most Merciful of all.' The lower panel of this album contains the familiar opening prayer, 'Lord, help to make things easy..." Part of the appeal of this prayer to the writers of mafradat albums was the recurrence of the letters šīn and rā' in the same line, in the words yassūni, 'wa'na' and wa'sana', which are all rendered here in a particularly graceful form. The remainder of the prayer is completed in rigāf in the side panel. The next folio contains the letters of the alphabet in shorthand and night. At the end of the latter the calligrapher has written jama‘at al-burūj al-malfūdī (i.e., 'the single letters are completed'). Then follow the letters in combination, which continue until folio 17b, where the calligrapher writes: "The letters have been completed with the help of God, the King, the Compassionate..." On the same folio, the well-known saying attributed to 'Ali ibn Abī Talib is given in the central panel.

The text finishes on folio 18th with the abjad in shorthand, and an invocation ascribing God to bless the Prophet and his family. The colophon appears in the central panel on folio 19b. Above and below it are panels of shorthand bearing an invocation glorifying God: 'Glory and praise to Thee, O God, and blessed be Thy Name'. The colophon inscription itself includes a petition for God's pardon for both the calligrapher and whoever examines the album, and concludes by thanking God and asking for his blessing on the Prophet and his family. The date of completion, AH 1509 (AD 1784–5), is written in rigāf and placed in the lower panel, beneath the invocation in shorthand; the text in the left-hand side panel states that the work was transcribed from that of Hafiz Osman Eliendi. The exercises are separated by gold-petalled medallions, which are also used to punctuate the various prayers and sayings. The side panels and any gaps at the ends of the text panels are filled by simple floral sprays. Considerable care has been taken over the binding and mounting of the folios. Nineteen original sheets, all mounted on board backed with marbled paper, have been joined at the fore-edge by strips of leather. Folio 20a bears no text, but is illuminated with a floral spray and leafy corner-pieces in two tones of gold. It appears to be original to the album, being finished in the same way as the other folios. All but three of the borders surrounding each page are made from gold- and silver-spinkled boards. The exceptions are the borders of folios 10, 10 and 19a, which are made from marbled paper.

2. For this prayer, see above, p. 111.
3. For the full wording of these texts, see above, p. 12.
Mufradat album

Signed by Seyyid Abdullah
Ottoman Turkey, 18th century

Folios 1–16. 9 5/8 x 7 1/8 cm (within inner rules); folios 17–24, 9 5/8 x 7 1/8 cm (within inner rules); 9 5/8 x 7 1/8 in (on the page, written in naskh, naskh and naskh in black ink on thick, well-polished, cream vellum paper backed with plain cream laid paper. Illumination in opaque watercolours and gold ink. Mounted on board, 20 5/8 x 29 5/8 cm, edged with leather and decorated with two wide bands of tinted, gold-speckled paper and a surrounding border of marbled paper—on some folios with a recurring "leather" motif—and with gold and coloured rules. Binding in red morocco leather with deep-stamped central medallions of gilt leather decorated with flower motifs and sat reserves in red, with doublures of marbled paper.

Acc. no. 301351

This album is the work of Seyyid Abdullah (d. 1735), one of the most important pupils of Haft Osman (1645–93). His full name was Seyyid Abdullah, son of Hasan el-Hajim, and he was known as the 'Emir of Yedikule', the district in Istanbul where he was born. His mother claimed descent from Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, hence his use of the title, seyyid, meaning 'descendant of the Prophet'.

He was first taught calligraphy by his father and was later accepted as a pupil by Haft Osman, from whom he obtained his jadzah in 1693, according to some in little over a year. He became a member of the HalveteiSuhi order, and was initiated into the order at the zekere or Sufi chapel of el-Hac Evheb by Seyyid Husayn Efendi.

Seyyid Abdullah was appointed teacher of calligraphy at the royal palace by Sultan Ahmet III (r. 1703–30). According to Miftakhm–zade, Seyyid Abdullah was renowned for the quality and purity of the ink he used, to such a degree that Ahmed III, upon hearing of it, is said to have ordered someone to fetch him a sample. The messenger arrived while Seyyid Abdullah was preparing the mushaf exercises for a pupil; having told the calligrapher the purpose of his visit he removed the inkwell. After the Sultan had examined the ink, the ink-well was returned to Seyyid Abdullah with its neck mounted in gold and accompanied by other gifts, as a token of Ahmed's esteem. One Miftakhm–zade relates this incident to illustrate both the admiration in which outstanding calligraphers were held, and the level of sophistication in calligraphic matters displayed by certain royal aesthetes such as Ahmed III. Numerous examples of Seyyid Abdullah's work are known. His quick hand allowed him to produce 24 copies of the Qur'an, two of which were made on Ahmed's orders.

Seyyid Abdullah was evidently highly regarded by Haft Osman, who is reported to have said "Seyyid Celbi (Abdullah) is a better calligrapher than me." Certainly, Seyyid Abdullah was an important link in the calligraphic "chain of transmission", being the teacher of Mehmed Rasim, one of the major calligraphers of the late 18th century.

The album consists of 16 folios, each of which bears two lines of large naskh with an intervening line of naskh. Each line is contained within a panel, those containing naskh ending in finely painted palmettes and floral scrolls on a gold ground, with highlights in white and touches of red. Each section begins with a rosette, and the panels of naskh are decorated with sprigs of sea leaf.

The album commences with a fine bismillah in naskh. Above the ligature of its an unusual "winged" palmette in a paired cartouche may represent a winged heart, sometimes interpreted as a Sufi symbol of love. Another work by Seyyid Abdullah is illuminated in the same manner, and presumably by the same artist.

Below the opening bismillah a smaller one is written in naskh, and in the bottom panel the short prayer, 'Lord, help to make things easy...'.

The album is signed twice. The first colophon, on folio 18, is in naskh and the calligrapher uses the formula katabahin ("written by"); the date has been obliterated. The second inscription, on folio 18a, is in naskh here the formula used is masbahabu ("copied by"), indicating that it was an instructional exercise, most likely a model produced for the benefit of a student.

2. For examples in the Topkapi Palace Museum, see Karasu 1962–9, nos. 1451–40, pp. 165, 166.
3. The Sultan also requested a copy of a work on the Prophet, the Mathnaw-i Shairi by Osman-zade Seyyid Ahmed Efendi.
5. See 126:33 (vii).
7. For this prayer, see above, p. 12.

5. 1962-29-18
بالسُبُحُنُ وَاللَّهُ بِغَيْرِ مُمَيِّضِ الْيَوْمِ يُبِيعُ بِالْجَمِيعِ بِغَيْرِ مُمَيِّضِ الْيَوْمِ يُبِيعُ بِالْجَمِيعِ

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by the letters of the alphabet in independent form; written first in Nashk and then in Thuluth. The first letter, the letters in combination, conclude with the customary expression 'The letters are completed with the help of God, the King, the Distinguished One, the Compassionate' (folio 88). The album ends with a series of sayings, some of which deal with the art of calligraphy, traditionally attributed to 'Abd al-Baqi Ta'lab. Calligraphy is concealed within the teaching method of the master. It is repeated in frequent repetition and it exists to serve Islam' (repeated on folios 88a, 94a and 104a). 'The assembly of the learned is like one of the Heavenly gardens' (folio 96b): 'Looking at the deceased is the greatest of all exhibitions' (folio 96c): 'Your real brother is the one who considers you in hard times with hard cash, not rhetoric about pedigree and descent' (folio 104a). 'Security in poverty is better than fear in prosperity' (folio 104c).

1. Inal, 197o, pp. 263–5.
2. Radio, no date, p. 195.
3. Cf. cat. E.

This album is the work of Osman Selim, called Şakir ('the thankful one'), who was the son of Osman Vefi, the calligrapher of cat. 10. Little is known about him, although a copy of the Qur'an, now in Cairo, was supposedly made by him for Cezarîyâ Hayrân Pasha. Although it is not extensively written about Osman Selim's calligraphy, it is stated that his hand is comparable to that of Hafiz Osman. There is some truth in this, for both styles of the qalam used by both calligraphers are generally similar, and the constituent parts of Osman Selim's letter forms—for example, the strokes and sub-stroke curves—are reminiscent of Hafiz Osman's in their virtuosity. The album is written in horizontal format and commences with a fine hamsa in Thuluth, which is repeated in Nashk. The title line contains the customary prayer seeking God's help. This is followed by two alphabets, one in Thuluth and the other in Nashk. The words are elegantly written, and in many cases the final letter of one combination touches the initial letter in the subsequent group. On folio 175b the usual expression of thanks occurs. This is followed by the letters of the alphabet in adjacent form, written in Nashk and Thuluth and ending with an invocation, 'God be blessed, for He is Best of Creators' (folio 176). The final prayer is written in Thuluth and Nashk (folios 176a–b): 'Glory be to Thee, O God, In Your praise may Your name be blessed, Your realm roused, Your Majesty commended, and there is no God but Thee.' (Alláhu Akbaru wa bi-risalátika wa bismilláhár rísalátika wa ta’ála sadaddu wa jallá riza’tika wa li iláhía ghayrúneka). One can see a notable difference in the way

and son rendered the first part of this prayer. The father used a smaller rub which allowed him the space to use a ligature between the alif and wa of takhsis, which he emphasized with a long and thick fathah. Of the 18 original text pages, 16 have been mounted on separate sheets of paper and concertina bound (folios 2–17). The first and last (folios 1 and 18) form the front and back doublures. The different exercises are separated by gold medallions, and the text panels are surrounded by gold and black rules. Otherwise the album is undecorated. The colophon appears in the bottom left-hand corner of folio 176.

1. Mahmud Inal (1970, p. 265) states that the only references he could find to Osman Selim were some notes by the late 19th-century calligrapher, Abdullâh Zübî.
2. See above, p. 12.

II

Mufarradát album signed by Osman Selim

Ottoman Turkey, dated 1193 (AD 1779)

3 folios, 9 1/2 x 7 1/5 in. (within inner black rule), concertina-bound, 3 lines to the page, written in Thuluth and Nashk in black ink on polished cream paper, with black and gold rules. Mounted on boards, 19 1/2 x 17 1/4 cm, edged with leather and with a gold-sprinkled green ground, decorated with white tulips and a brown band. Binding in ribbed maroon morocco leather, with a gold-tooled board to the front and a floral board, the doublures of European laid, light green paper have an eagle watermark. Accession no. 370168.
The first part of this text contains a smaller rubric, emphasizing the presence of a 'he' and 'alif' alif. This emphasis is highlighted with a larger rubric. The text boxes are separated by black rules, and the text panels are decorated in green and black colors.

The inscription is undecorated. The verso is blank.

20, p. 365 states that he could find no notes by the calligrapher.
Mafradat album signed by Mehmed Şevki
Ottoman Turkey, dated 1283 (AD 1866–7)

11 folios, 10 x 15 cm (within inner rule); 3 lines to the page, written in thulth, naskh and riqa' in black and red inks on cream, wove paper. Illumination in opaque watercolour and gold pigment. Mounted on boards, 25.7 x 30.2 cm, edged with leather and decorated with coloured paper grounds with gold floral and ribbons decoration in a late rococo style. Binding in dark brown morocco leather with a central medallion, corners pieces and border in turquoise-paper overlay, decorated with floral motifs in gold; double rows of red pasteboard with a central sunburst and corner pieces in two tones of gold; gilt leather slip-case.

Accesion no. H.65.19
Published Catalogue 1995, cat. 170

Mehmed Şevki (1379–97) was born in Kastamonu in north-western Anatolia, but was brought up in Istanbul after his father, a merchant, moved there when Şevki was three years old. While still at school in the district of Akkavas he began to take lessons in calligraphy from his uncle, Mehmed Hulus Efendi (d. 1374). By the age of twelve he had obtained his iqârah, at which point his uncle told him that he had nothing more to teach him and suggested he continue his studies with the renowned calligrapher, Mustafa Izzet (d. 1376). In a burst of emotion, the boy told his uncle that he would never study with anyone other than him.

This did not prevent Mehmed Şevki from studying the works of Şeyh Hamdullah and Hafiz Osman, and eventually developing his own personal style. According to his friend, the calligrapher Sani Efendi (d. 1512), Şevki couldn’t render a clumsy letter if he tried. Şevki was also an illuminator and bookbinder: in short, he was skilled in all aspects of manuscript production.

This album is of particular interest because it shows the miṣ’ar al-burjâf, the method used to measure the size of the lettering. This is indicated by a series of tiny circles, each symbolizing a rhomboid, or a short stroke of the pen to form an oblique angled parallel line. Rhomboids were generally used, heuristically if not always in practice, as a unit of measurement. In the thulth script the letter alif is allowed eight such units, while the same letter in naskh is given five. In order not to obscure the discriticals, the rhomboids and, in the case of thulth, small circles are drawn in red ink in this manuscript.

There are three lines of script on each page of the album, two of thulth and a central line in naskh. The text begins with a fine baṣmâlah, and below it, in the central panel, a saying attributed to the Prophet, 'The Sultan is the shadow of God on Earth.' The final line is an invocation which was often placed at the beginning of mafradat albums: 'The source of my success is from nowhere else other than from God; in Him I trust and rely, and to Him I repeat.' This page (folio 1b) is beautifully composed. Şevki often elides certain letters, subtly extending the final letter in one word to form the initial letter of the next. There can be little doubt about the calligrapher’s visual judgement and ability, which involves more than merely following a measuring system. The final line aptly illustrates this point. In any line of calligraphy, in any composition, there will always be innate tension between the space available and the width of the stroke. Here, in order to create a properly balanced composition, the calligrapher has enlarged some elements – like the dhamma(‘vowel on the final ‘a’ of sahâlah – while reducing others – like the word anâh, which is written in naskh and tucked in at the end of the line of thulth. It is instructive to compare the prayer in thulth at the top of folio 2a with the same prayer as it appears in cat. 7, folio 1b. The unknown master of the latter has used a foliate motif to fill up the space above the extension stroke of the final ‘a’ in the second word, wâliyya. Şevki, on the other hand, has enlarged the orthographic marks over the final ‘a’ of wâliyya and writes the final sentence in the panel of naskh below. The treatment of these orthographic marks, and indeed the entire form and rhythm of the opening words of this prayer, recalls the work of Şeyh Hamdullah (compare cat. 16, folio 1b).

The final line of thulth on the same page reads 'Success is rare; it will only be given to a distinguished servant [of God].' Here, Şevki has given the letter fit (‘success’) the full measure of the single form of the letter and has extended the ligature of the letter ‘yn in ‘ahd (‘servant’) so that the
call, the thumb-sized initials, small circles in this manuscript.

Two of the script ornaments, two of tahfizh(Model). The text is
composed of a single line of writing, each word written in a different
style, as can be seen in the following example:

This page contains the opening
sentences of the first prayer, folio 11b.

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The
two halves of the composition are in
balance. To give greater visual 'weight'
to the word saifāl, he has enlarged the
fażub vowel, but in order to preserve
the harmony of the composition he has
done the same with the fażub vowel in
'shād. Great calligraphers do not simply
continue tradition; they 'make' it.
The independent letters of the
alphabet commence on folio 18 after
the customary prayer seeking success.
These are followed by the bawzi' proper,
which continues until folio 101 in cheluh
and on folio 111 in naskh script. The
text closes with the invocation glorify-
ing the name of God. The cheluh text
on folio 108–114 consists of the ahṣād
and prayers.
The lines of script are written within
closed cartouches reserved against a
gold ground which has been stippled
with a stipple-dot motif. Exercice
depenses are separated by coloured
rosettes. Throughout the album the
text panels are decorated with gold
flowers which form a wall-like pattern. A
similar pattern is used above the
sin of the buḥulāl on folio 13,
though here it incorporates a palmette.
Gold rules surround each panel of text,
while the overall area of text on each
opening has two gold borders deco-
rated with a punched circle-and-dot
motif. These borders are separated by
a band, differently coloured on each
opening, bearing a leaf-chain motif in
gold. All the decoration in the outer
border is in a late Ottoman rococo style
which contrasts with the more tradi-
tional floral patterns around the text.
The 11 original sheets are mounted on
15 album folios, and each folio is
edged with brown morocco leather.
This trim is painted on the fore-edge
with a pattern in two colours of gold;
featuring floral sprays alternating with
sac leaves, which is visible when the
album is closed.
It would be interesting to know
whether the binding and illumination
are also the work of Şevkı; his calli-
graphic work is known occasionally to
have been illuminated by others. All
that can be said with certainty is that
the album was made in 1566, when
Şevḳı was working at the Ministry of
War. In the colophon at the bottom of
folio 114 he refers to himself as a khāṭ-
āb (Khurshid baba), a junior clerk, in
the office of a maktāb, the written title
of a maktāb, the written title of an
Ottoman government department. 6

1. The design resembles that found on
the binding of cat. 7.
2. Un 1566, pp. 491, 492; Rado,
no date, pp. 211, 212, Derman 1991,
3. For example, see cat. 77–80, below.
5. For other examples of Şevḳı's
work, see Derman 1991, pls 129–91.
6. Rado (no date, p. 225) mentions a
Mevlevi text copied by Şevḳı but
illuminated by Nureddin Efendi.
Karalama and siyahi mashq

Practice is essential for any artist, the calligrapher no less than others. It is important to him in several ways. In the first place it allows him to determine the size of the script to be used, to try out the pen, to judge whether or not the ink is of the correct consistency and to establish the overall visual impact of the written words. Secondly, it enables him to practice certain letter shapes, and to overcome any unsteadiness or stiffness in the hand. The process is analogous to that of a musician tuning up his instrument, positioning himself comfortably and focusing on the keyboard or fret; or of a painter executing sketches before starting work on the ultimate version of a painting.

For economy's sake, the calligrapher traditionally tended to use all available areas of space on the sheet when he was practising. The result was often a heavily worked, dark sheet with little white ground visible. The contrast between these 'black' rough copies and the 'white' fair copies was clearly expressed in Arabic. The term masawuada, from the verb sawwada ('to blacken'), was used to refer to practice sheets, whereas the fair copy was known as mashahyada from the verb bastyada ('to make something white, clean, perfect'). This black and white imagery was maintained in both Turkish and Persian terminology. In Ottoman Turkish the Arabic-derived terms miuwele and telyis, a verbal form derived from bastyada, were used, though the most common term for practice sheets was karalama, a verbal noun formed from the Turkish word for black, kara. In Persian the equivalent term was siyahi mashq, literally 'black practice'.

By the 18th century, in the Ottoman empire, karalama had come to mean the process of turning a sheet of paper black by writing on every suitable space. The calligrapher would turn the page as he worked, sometimes writing upside down in the space between lines already written, at other times at an angle of 45 degrees, as if to force himself to concentrate on form rather than content. Unlike more formal calligraphic compositions, technique played a much greater part than content: sometimes the texts have little or no meaning.

Such exercises were obviously very personal to the calligrapher, as he concentrated on potential difficulties or tried out new ideas. Some must initially have been retained by the calligrapher himself as reference notes or to assist the recall of the various stages of training through which a master had passed, but eventually, like an artist's sketches, these practice sheets began to attract the attention of connoisseurs as collectable items. The karalama originated, therefore, as a rough copy or practice sheet, but was developed as a genre in its own right, being signed and dated by the calligrapher and regarded in much the same way as more formal compositions, such as cat. 165, Appendix 1.

The appreciation and understanding of karalama is a relatively recent development in art-historical circles: virtually nothing has been written about such pieces in works on Islamic art and calligraphy, although examples of karalama were valued and collected in the Muslim world as early as the 17th century and probably long before.

In Iran, such practice sheets, known as siyahi mashq, were almost invariably written in nazari 'iq or shikastah script and usually give the impression of having been produced with a much greater degree of spontaneity than their Ottoman counterparts. In many Persian examples the text became an almost abstract composition, with so much repetition of letters and strokes that the literal content is entirely subsumed in the technique. The karalama reveals the calligrapher's struggle with both the materials and techniques of his craft. These intense and powerful pieces, in which rhythm and repetition play a major part, must have had religious dimensions for their creators, as well as artistic and technical ones.

2. An Ottoman calligrapher, Seyyid Ahmed Hamdi (d. 1748), for example, was called karalama, the karalama-writer, due to his substantial output of signed karalames. For examples of his work, see Durman 1983, pls 11, 13.
3. See Edgi, no date.
4. The earliest surviving examples seem to date from the 19th century. One by Seyh Hashimullah, dated 1097/1685 (1720) is reproduced in Rado, no date, p. 55.
5. Shikastah or 'broken writing' is a derivative of nasta 'iq. For a fuller discussion, see cat. 31, below.
Important to him was the script to be used, legibility and to establish comfort in him to practise his art. The process of setting himself comfortably was to be done before starting any work.

Available areas of manuscript copy were worked, dark letters being preferred, though copies and transcriptions such as the fair copy was 'clean, perfect'. A term, 'kufi', is used in terminology. In the initial stages it is a form derived from the Arabic alphabet, the equivalent term is more widely used in the process of settling a script. In the case of the Kufi script, the form derived from letters was seen to concentrate on the letterforms of the Arabic alphabet, technique and meaning.

The work concentrated on the use of the tool and tooling used by the copyist. In the case of training and studying, these practice sessions are known as 'kufi' sessions. The kufi was known as a genre in its own right, although the same way that it was used in the development in different periods in works on calligraphy as related to the Al-Shafie School. The kufi was probably written in the Al-Shafie School and produced with the tooling used by many Iranian copyists, with a repetition of the same technique and techniques of the style a major part of the technical ones.
13 Practice sheet signed by Mustafa-dede
Ottoman Turkey, 16th century
12.8 x 18 cm (within inner gold rule); 6 lines written in naskh and naskhī in black and reddish-brown ink on cream laid paper with some water staining. Mounted on modern boards, 18 x 27.4 cm, decorated with a plain brown border and black and gold rules.
Acc. no. CAI.5
Published Geneva, 1991, cat. 163

This kahrama fragment is signed at the bottom of the page by Mustafa-dede, who was the son of Seyh Handshah and a sophisticated and learned calligrapher in his own right. He spent most of his life in Uskudar, apart from undertaking the Hajj and spending some time in Egypt. He earned his copies by his hand but had to master his craft with the help of others after Hamsullah’s death in 1512. Mustafa-dede died in 1558 at the age of 43, after swallowing poison.1

The script lacks the crispness that one would expect in the work of a master like Mustafa-dede, and the tawashi stroke on the alf varies considerably from one example to another. Nevertheless, as it is undated, a practice piece, it may be the work of Mustafa-dede at an early stage in his career. Whoever picked the second and third lines to make a pounce (kalpa) evidently thought so.2 The text reads: "Sincerity has definite characteristics and... and according to the Prophet, May God bless him and grant him salvation... its location is between Heaven and Earth..."1

2. For pouncing, see the section on kalpas, p. 142, below.

14 Anonymous practice sheet
Ottoman Turkey, 16th century
12.1 x 32.7 cm (within blue frame, including irregular edge); 6 lines written in naskhī in black ink on cream-coloured paper. Mounted on paper and thin card, 21.4 x 32 cm, decorated with a blue border carrying a gold leaf design, multi-coloured rules and gold-speckled margins.
Acc. no. CAI.179

The appearance of this example is reminiscent of a kahrama by Hafs Osman that is now in Istanbul.1 Here, four lines of naskhī are written above two lines which are upside-down. The resulting overlapping of characters creates curious 'knots'. The diacritical points give an initial impression of having been 'scattered', like fallen leaves, across the surface of the paper, though on inspection each proves to be in its correct position.


15 Practice sheet signed by Mir ‘Imad al-Hasani
Qazvin, before AD 1599–1600
11.4 x 16.7 cm (within green rule); written in nasta’īlī in black ink on polished, cream, wove paper, painted with gold pigment. Mounted on modern card, 20.7 x 18.3 cm, decorated with a plain red border and multi-coloured rules.
Acc. no. CAI.346

This example bears the name of the great Iranian master, Mir ‘Imad al-Hasani. The text consists of the baqda‘ah and the first surah of the Qur’an, al-Fatihah. Written across this and upside-down there is a distich in Persian.

Look at the beautiful mirth of a mar- cius which opens in your presence.
And will not look into the eyes of one who is the render of courtesy.
On the right-hand side, also written upside-down, the colophon is repeated twice: ‘Its scribe is the one needy [for God’s favour],’ Mir ‘Imad al-Hasani, May he be forgiven, in the Abode of Authority, heavenly Qazvin.’ Mir ‘Imad is known to have lived in Qazvin until 1599–1600, after which date he settled in Isfahan, where he died in 1615.3

Mir ‘Imad appears to have found the form of the nasta’īlī to his liking on the day that he wrote this example. In the penultimate line of surah al-Fatihah he opens on the nasta’īlī of a‘la Hadha ("here") a little too wide; he then concentrates on the ja’2 and the nis’r until he gets the perfect ‘pitch’.

The lines of script are surrounded by cloud cartouches, drawn with a ‘crinkly’ edge, on a gold ground in a manner fashionable in the 19th century, when this decoration was most probably added.

16 Anonymous practice sheet
Iran, 19th century
16.3 x 20.1 cm (within pink border); written in nasta’īlī in black ink on cream paper painted with gold pigment and coated with lacquer. Mounted on modern boards, 19 x 23.4 cm, decorated with gold and multi-coloured rules.
Acc. no. CAI.446

This sheet is a straightforward example of the art of nasta’īlī mushaf and shows a calligrapher practicing a passage of text in Persian. That part of the text which can be deciphered reads: ‘May God have mercy on the late Mir ‘Imad al-Hasani.’

The writing is set within cloud cartouches on a gold ground and is large, allowing only four or five words to the line. The script is firm and unaltering and the ink has been thickly applied using a wide-cut reed nib, but the thin coat of lacquer has obscured some of the subtle variations in the movement of the pen.
Practice sheet

In pink border;
in black ink on
d with gold
and with lacquer
on boards,
into with gold
tiles.

forward example
nipple and shows
being a passage of
part of the text
printed ready 'May
is the late Mir 'Imad
within a cloud cur-
round and is large
five words on the
line and undeter-
the thickly applied
nib, but the thin
obscured some of
in the movement.
Practice sheet signed by Ghulam Riza

Iran, dated 1287 (AD 1870–71)

The boldness and spontaneity of this impressive composition contrasts with the painstakingly delicate nature of the floral ground. The beginning and the 'recharging points'.

1. Accession no. CA.427. 16 cm (within inner gold rule); written in nasta’īf in black ink on coated paper. Illumination in ink, opaque watercolours and gold pigment. Mounted on board, 38 x 24.6 cm, decorated with gold and coloured rules. Accession no. CA.427.

Mizra Ghulam Riza Efshani (d. 1886–7) was one of the best known Iranian calligraphers of the 19th century. Numerous examples of his work exist in museums and libraries throughout Iran, and the Khalili Collection includes 17 examples in his hand. A large album of his calligraphy, formerly the property of Husayn Khan Mar’is al-Dawlah Mihan and now in the University Library, Tehran, contains a brief biography of Ghulam Riza. From this we learn that he was named after the Imam Riza, to whom his father prayed for a son whilst on a pilgrimage to the Mashhad shrine. He came to the attention of Muhammadshah Qajar (r. 1834–48), and was appointed teacher to the royal princes. After Muhammadshah's death, he maintained cordial relations with Nasir al-Din Shah, but when certain jealous rivals accused him of being a heretic he was arrested and sentenced to death. The Shah was persuaded to spare him by a friendly courier, Dost-Muhammad Khan Mirzā ‘Alī, and Ghulam Riza petitioned the Shah to have the accusation withdrawn and to be restored to his former position.

This fine piece incorporates several verses, including some by the 14th-century poet Hafiz. The pen has been dragged across the paper in sweeping strokes, which, at certain points, allow the paper to shine through the viscous ink and show where the calligrapher's hand passed or changed direction. In examples like this, the fine movements of the pen can be studied in detail.

Anyone who has been in the presence of a calligrapher writing nasta’īf will be familiar with the squiggle of the pen as it executes its broad sweeping movements across the surface of the paper; a noise punctuated by moments of silence as the writer pauses to recharger his pen. Such moments take visible form in a piece such as this. We can clearly detect both the 'rest points', where one stroke ends and another begins, and the 'recharging points'.

The theme of the text on ca. 19 is love and friendship. In the colophon, Nasir al-Din Shah expresses the intention that the piece should be kept by his treasurer, Dost-‘Ali Khan. The composition is aligned diagonally across the sheet, and part of it is written upside down. It is dominated by the sweeping horizontal strokes characteristic of nastā’īf. At several points the letters thickly overlap, although they are never so convoluted as to be illegible. At the top is a painted rendering of the impression of the Shah's seal.

Two practice sheets by Nasir al-Din Shah

Iran, dated respectively Jamad al-‘Ala 1271 and 2 Rajab 1271 (February–March and 21 March 1855)

35 x 20.7 cm (original), 25 x 16 cm (within brown border); written in black ink on polished cream paper. Illumination in opaque watercolour, ink and gold pigment. Mounted on board, 35.8 x 23.5 cm, decorated with gold and coloured rules and floral motifs. Accession no. 1978.19.

26 x 19.5 cm (within inner gold rule); written in nasta’īf in black ink of variable density on polished cream paper. Illuminated in opaque watercolours, ink and gold pigment. Mounted on board, 35.7 x 25 cm, with floral decoration. Accession no. CA.424.

Both these practice sheets were written for a court treasurer, Dost-‘Ali Khan, by the Qajar ruler Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848–96). Cat. 19 is a lament for the departure of a friend; according to the text, the day of its composition was turbulent and windy, though the page itself is rather tranquil in appearance when compared with other examples of nastā’īf written in Mashhad by Iranian calligraphers. There is considerable repetition of letters, combinations of characters and words, but the extravagant flourishes and dense overlapping of strokes that one usually sees in comparable examples is absent. Here, the repetition of strokes makes a pleasing, if not very dramatic composition. It is worth noting that the ends of the sweeping sub-linear strokes required a touch with the nib to finish them off, and the consistency of the ink at the ends of these letters varies quite considerably. Close observation of practice sheets can, at times, teach us more about calligraphy than a formal, highly finished piece.

To the left of the text, a cut edge running the length of the written area marks the entire edge of the original. The roughly drawn roses and clusters of leaves which surround the composition are run across the cut edge are in a different hand to the remainder of the decoration and must have been added when the text was mounted. The other floral ornament is of a standard Qajar type, freely and competently executed.

The page is dominated by a painted image of the magnificent seal impression of Nasir al-Din Shah, in gold, which rather overpowers the composition.
Four ḫāṣāt. Calligraphers’ licences

The relationship between master calligrapher and pupil was always an important one, especially in the Ottoman Empire. From the 16th century onwards an Ottoman calligrapher, no matter how great or mediocre, almost always gave the name of his teacher in the colophon to any work he produced.1 The reasons for this apparent reverence were various. Ottoman calligraphers were acutely aware of being part of a sisâlab or ‘chain’ of masters stretching back to Şeyh Hamdullah and beyond. The mention of his master in the colophon also implied that the calligrapher possessed an ḫaṣāt, or licence to practise. But the relationship was more complex than a simple matter of apprenticeship. It was not only a technique that was being taught: an almost scholarly way of life was being tacitly transmitted in the process.

A master had to have a certain psychological insight into the characters of his potential pupils. If he detected a hint of dissatisfaction or disharmony between himself and a pupil whom he thought might prove obstructive, he could bluntly, or tactfully, discourage him from pursuing his training. For example, the young Mahmud Cefaâeddin, represented in the Khalili Collection by cat. 35 (vii) and 74, was rebuffed by the teachers he approached.

The ultimate aim of a pupil was to obtain the ḫaṣāt which would allow him to practise independently and take his own pupils. When this system first arose is unknown, although one authority has attributed the idea to the early 15th-century Mamluk calligrapher Ibn al-Sâ‘îgh.2 Traditionally, the pupil had to complete a presentation piece of several lines in length in order to earn the ḫaṣāt. This was not an arduous task, and certainly by the mid-19th century it seems to have become a mere formality. There was no set formula for the presentation piece. Those dealt with in this catalogue consist of Qur’anic verses, ḥadîth, biyâh and even short prose extracts, such as a ḥadîth qu’dît (cat. 23, 21 and 22 respectively).

From the examples in the Khalili Collection it appears that the would-be licensee did not sign his work; his own name was mentioned only in the appended licence. Once the work had been approved, the certificate was written in a space left for it, usually at the bottom, though it sometimes appears elsewhere. The language of the certificate varied but normally included the all-important sentence ajażżab bi-ma’ad al-kâthib (‘I have licensed him to use the words katahâbu [‘written by’]’). Many terms were used for the act of writing and all could be employed by scribes, in scribal signatures or colophons, whether they had a licence or not: such terms include nammâqa (‘to write elegantly’); sawwâda (‘to make a rough copy’); raqama (‘to write with correct vocalization’); and ḥarrara (‘to compose’).3 After they had obtained their licences scribes could continue to use any of these verbs. Only katahâbu was restricted to licensed scribes, in the Ottoman world at least.

The bestowal of the licence marked a major advance in the calligrapher’s career. In the case of some outstanding students, the occasion was marked with great pomp and in the presence of important dignitaries. The ceremony usually took place in the local mosque, but this was not always the case. Münstim-zade tells us that Mehmed Emin ibn Ibrahim (d. 1775) was awarded his licence at a ceremony in a well-known paper mill in Istanbul, with many dignitaries in attendance.4 Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, the chronicler of late 18th-century Egypt, relates that Hasan al-Rushti was awarded his ḫaṣāt before a large audience, some of whom would have been co-signatories in support of the word of the licensing master.5 In both the licence issued to Hasan al-Rushti and cat. 21 below, all the supporting signatories as well as the licensor use the verb ajażţa, ‘to licence’. On cat. 23, the co-signatories use the expression adhâna 𝑙𝑎𝑏’h ‘to give someone permission’, rather than ajażţa 𝑙𝑎𝑏’h ‘to license someone’, but the terminology seems to have been fairly fluid.

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1. The first person to have evolved a formula for the colophon that incorporated the names of both master and pupil seems to have been Ahmed Karahinari. See Rado, no date, p. 72.
3. For possible meanings of all these words, see Derman 1975.
5. This licence, which is signed by 13 calligraphers, is now in McGill University, Montreal; see Gâcek 1969.
6. Cat. 23 is signed by three other calligraphers, while the ajażţa on cat. 23 is supported by 20 names.
important one, especially calligrapher, not in the colophon various. Ottoman waters stretching here in the colophon also the relationship between a technique that is transmitted in the of his potential child and a pupil discourage him presented in the approach.

him to practise known, although calligrapher, Ibn had several lines in already by the mid-formula for the verses, ṣadad, ṣawad and respectively). licensee did not. Once the work was at the bottom, and normally prepared him to use writing and all rather they had a ṣadad "to make a subject to compose". of these verbs least.

his career. In the compartment and in the local mosque, calligrapher ibn Ibrahim still in Istanbul, chronicler of late one before a large the word of the word below, all the On cat. 23, the 's', rather than early fluid.
Calligrapher’s licence issued by Mustafa Safaı
Ottoman Turkey (?), dated 1519 (2175-1).

This is a rare example of an istizâh having been issued without giving the name of the licensee. As the calligrapher’s licence was of such importance to him, it is difficult to know what value could be set upon such a document.
The sample of the licence’s work consists of a line of thulûh and a portion of naskh. The thulûh is a quotation from surah al-‘Arsh (2) verse 107: “We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures.” The naskh consists of three ḥuruf.

Underneath these, in the final panel, the licence itself is written in naskh, as follows: “Thanks be to God the Benefactor to all the world, [Who] by His grace has created, without stint, the heavens and the earth, bless him for whom He created the throne and the pen, and bless his family and companions with the well-springs of wisdom. Now, I have been hired by [name of client] the writer of this piece of script, and I have licensed him. I am the forbear of wrathers, Mustafa Safaı, a pupil of Ibrahim Çakır Musıl, in the year 1519.”
The licence is one of the few examples of Ottoman calligraphy with the signature of the master, who has clearly been assembled from different elements at an unknown period, the decorated panels may date from the mid-16th century. There are close parallels in Ottoman Qur’an illumination of that period.

Calligrapher’s licence issued by Seyyid Mehmed Salih Sükri
Ottoman Turkey, dated 1538 (2185-4).

This licence is attached to a ḥiyâyah which is described below: “The ḥiyâyah was an examination piece submitted by the calligrapher Seyyid Mehmed Zühî to his master, Mehmed Salih Sükri; it bears the latter’s licence permitting Zühî to practice (istizâh bi-‘add al-hiyyâ) together with the endorsements of three other calligraphers. All four licences appear at the bottom of the sheet, written in naskh in rectangular areas defined by floral sprays.
The licence issued by Mehmed Salih Sükri is contained in the second panel from the right, not the first as one might expect, and reads, “Thanks be to God Who honoured us with the knowledge of writing. Blessings be upon Muhammad who decreed that his community take up writing, as it has been said, ‘Bestow on your children the gift of writing.’ Now, I have licensed the elegant writer [name] of this blessed ḥiyâyah, Seyyid Mehmed Zühî, to use the words ‘written by’ I am his teacher, Seyyid Mehmed Salih Sükri, a student of Seyyid Hafıs Ali Riza, May God pardon him both, on 21 Muharram 1538 [16 November 1625].”
The endorsement at the far right, given pride of place at the beginning of the line, is by Sükri’s own teacher. It states, “Thanks be to God Who honoured us with the knowledge of writing. Blessings be upon Muhammad who decreed that his community take up writing, as it has been said, ‘Bestow on your children the gift of writing.’ Now, I have licensed the writer [name] of this blessed ḥiyâyah, Seyyid Mehmed Zühî, May God increase his calligraphic skill [ḥattâr] and knowledge. I am the poor wretch Seyyid Hafıs Ali Riza, a student of Şeyh Suleyman Veibli, May God pardon him both, on 21 Muharram 1538.”

The wording of all four coroutines is similar, but with a number of small but interesting diversions. Two of the writers refer to Zühî as the ‘writer’ (kâtib) of the ḥiyâyah, whereas one, Mehmed Racal, uses ‘copyist’ (mu’attal) of this noble ḥiyâyah, es-Seyyid Mehmed Zühî, May God increase his knowledge and discernment. I am the poor wretch Mehmed Racal, a student of Abdulrahman Hilmi, May God pardon him both, on 21 Muharram 1538.”

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1. See the section on ḥiyâyahs below, cats. 32.
2. For an account of an earlier calligrapher’s diploma, see Gacek 1989.
3. Radio, no date, p. 219. Şeyh Suleyman Veibli Kadı of Bursa was also the teacher of Halil Sükri Nailbendî, the calligrapher of cat. 31.
4. For further discussion of this term, see above, p. 32.
22

Calligrapher’s licence issued by Mehmed Zühdî
Ottoman Turkey, probably Edirne, dated 7 Dhu'l-Hijjah 1280 (14 May 1664)
2 sheets now mounted as one, 33.5 x 23.8 cm (from outer edge of rounded border); 14 lines (5 and 9 lines respectively), written in thuluth and naskh in black ink on very fine, cream, wove paper. Illumination in opaque watercolour, ink and gold pigment. Mounted on blue and cream wove papers pasted onto laid cream paper, 40 x 31.5 cm.
Accession no. GAL258

This is an unusually well-produced licence, and relates to several issued in Edirne at about the same period.1 The original part of the document is the portion within the bands of gold cable. Both the white band with a gold floral chain and the blue outer margins have been pasted on to the backing.

Two pieces of writing at the top, on the first ‘folios’, form the presentation piece by Mehmed Nazif, the would-be licensee. The first, written in thuluth, reads, ‘God loves the servant who is pious, prosperous and unostentatious’.

This is followed by two further thuluths, the first in another line of thuluth (‘Men of knowledge in my community are like the Prophets of Israel’), and the second in three lines of naskh (‘There remains one community within my community that upholds the ordinance of God and will not be harmed by those who oppose or disappoint them, unless God wills it’).

The licence and endorsement appear in the pointed cartouches at the bottom. The first on the right is that of the licentiate, Mehmed Zühdî, and reads, ‘I have licensed (ajazata) the writer (zühdî) of this blessed, coveted piece (ipṣî), Mehmed Haendi, May God lengthen his life and increase his learning, knowledge and perfection, and grant his wishes and those of his teacher. I am the son-in-law of Abdullah Hilmi, known as the writer’s son.’
The licence is decorated with palmettes, simple vegetal ornamentation and cartouches, including two with stylized cypress-shaped vases with bouquets of roses.

1 A copy of the Qur’an by another pupil of Mehmed Zühdî gives the teacher’s epithet as dated ki haussizade, the son-in-law of the baker’s son’. The item, dated 1860, is now in a private collection in Geneva.

23

Calligrapher’s licence issued by Hafiz Mehmed Şerif
Ottoman Turkey, probably Edirne, dated 7 Dhu'l-Hijjah 1280 (14 May 1664)
3 sheets, now mounted as one, 32.4 x 22.5 cm (within outer black rule); 12 lines, written in thuluth, naskh and nûfi, in black ink on white, laid paper. Illumination in opaque watercolour, ink and gold pigment. Mounted on laid paper and glossy, tinted paper, 33.4 x 23.8 cm.
Accession no. GAL243

This licence was issued by Mehmed Zühdî, called ki haussizade (‘the baker’), four years after receiving his own licence to practice, cat. 21 above.2 The recipient was Mehmed Haendi.

The text written by Haendi commences with a bismillah in thuluth, followed by a hadith (‘Il God loves one of His servants He will overwhelm him with knowledge.’) Next, written in naskh, comes a hadith qudsi, a particularly sacred tradition, consisting of a dialogue between the pen and the Creator.

He said, ‘Come, O Pen, write!’
Replied the pen, ‘What shall I write, O my Creator?’
Said God Most High, ‘Write what will endure until the Day of Judgment.’
Then the pen said, ‘With what shall I begin, O Lord?’
So he said, May He be exalted, ‘Begin with bismillah al-rabman al-rasman.’
No so the pen wrote.

This is followed by two more hadiths, the first in another line of thuluth (‘Men of knowledge in my community are like the Prophets of Israel’), the second in three lines of naskh (‘There remains one community within my community that upholds the ordinance of God and will not be harmed by those who oppose or disappoint them, unless God wills it’)

The licence and endorsement appear in the pointed cartouches at the bottom. The first on the right is that of the licentiate, Mehmed Zühdî, and reads, ‘I have licensed (ajazata) the writer (zühdî) of this blessed, coveted piece (ipṣî), Mehmed Haendi, May God lengthen his life and increase his learning and perfection. I am the son-in-law of Abdullah Hilmi, known as the baker, in the year 1277.’

The endorsement reads, ‘I have licensed (ajazata) the writer (zühdî) of this blessed, coveted piece, Mehmed Haendi, May God lengthen his life, and

several monuments in that city bear examples of their work.’ The other signatories were all inhabitants of Edirne, and many of the same names appear elsewhere on licences issued there from as early as 1488.

2. For a complete listing of the signatories, see pp. 157–158, below. For one of them, Mustafa, see Onur 1985, pp. 174–175.
3. For example, reproduced the large circular composition in the dome of the mosque of Bayezid II.
The *Hilāyah*.
The verbal image of the Prophet

The *Hilāyah* is a description of the Prophet Muhammad, giving both his physical characteristics and something of his behaviour and temperament. In this catalogue the capitalized term *Hilāyah* denotes this descriptive text, whereas the word *hilya* is used for a calligraphic rendering of it.

The traditional description reproduced in most copies of the *Hilāyah* is one attributed to ‘Ali ibn Abī Talib, the Prophet’s son-in-law and nephew, who died in AH 661. It is the nostaligic, personal impression of one who was a confidant and friend of the Prophet, as well as one of the first converts to Islam. One of the most important sources for this text is found in the *Kitāb al-Shifā* ′Ir-Taqīf Ḥuqayq al-Mustafā, a group of biographical accounts of the Prophet by al-Qadi ‘Iyad ibn Musa, who died in AH 1149. The Khalili Collection contains a fine 16th-century copy of the *Shifā* (MS469, ex-catalogue) which once belonged to Suleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520–66). The text is divided into four major sections, which are in turn divided into sub-sections, all dealing with some aspect of the life and times of the Prophet. Apart from ‘Ali ibn Abī Talib, reliable sources of information quoted by al-Qadi ‘Iyad are the accounts of the Prophet’s immediate circle of family, friends and Companions, including those of ‘Aishah, Anas ibn Malik and Abu Hurayrah, among others.

There are, of course, no pictorial records of Muhammad dating from his lifetime; however, the description of the Prophet attributed to ‘Ali, which is regarded as the most authentic, presents us with a unique and powerful verbal image. Pre-Islamic and early Islamic culture was essentially a verbal one: people were able to express their thoughts, either with great concision, or with elaborate poetry and rhetoric, depending on the circumstances. They had at their disposal a language of enormous vocabulary, with an almost infinite facility for capturing every descriptive nuance. Thus, although the Arabic of the *Hilāyah* is archaic it is also wonderfully concise and expressive, and obviously records the language freely used in Mecca during the time of ‘Ali.

‘Ali’s is the version which became the basis of the stylized compositions found on most *hilyas*, and divides into 27 parts, as follows:

1. When ‘Ali described the Prophet, May God bless him and grant him salvation, (2) he said, "He was neither exceedingly tall, (3) nor unduly short. (4) He was of medium height. (5) His hair was not short, nor too curly, (6) nor was it very straight nor long. (7) It hung with a wave. (8) He was not thin. (9) His flesh was firm. (10) His face had a roundness. (11) His skin was of rosy whiteness. (12) He had large black eyes (13) with thick long lashes. (14) His bones were large and strong. He had very broad shoulders. (15) He had fine hair on the lower part of his chest and the upper part of his stomach. (16) His hands and feet were large and full. (17) When walking, he leaned forward, as if descending a slope. (18) If he turned to see something, he would turn with his whole body. (19) Between his shoulders he had the Seal of Prophet hood. He was the last of the Prophets. (20) He was the most generous-hearted. (21) He spoke with a sincere, most reliable tone. (22) He had the most gentle nature and temperament. (23) He was from the noblest tribe. (24) Whoever saw him for the first time was awestruck. (25) Whoever knew him socially, liked him. (26) Whoever described him, said, "I have not seen anyone like him, before or since.” (27) May God bless him and grant him, and his relatives and Companions, salvation.”

In his monumental work, the *Sābīb al-Ašrāh*, the 15th-century author al-Qazwashtani provides more details of other accounts, as well as commenting on that of ‘Ali and providing a valuable explanation of many of the terms employed. For example, the word *musharrab* is used to describe the Prophet’s complexion in ‘Ali’s text (par 11). Al-Qazwashtani relates the story of Dammam: ‘As he entered upon a group of people and asked, “Who amongst you is the son of Abd al-Muntasir?” They said, “There he is, the angbar, the leaning one,
The Hilyah

24
Amulet
Ottoman Turkey or India, 18th or 19th century

Executed in niqab on yellow chalcocyanite, 4.3 x 0.6 cm
Accesion no. 10.75

Amulets made of precious and semi-precious stones have been in existence throughout the Middle East from ancient times. With the rise of Islam, amulets or talismans were often inscribed with verses from the Qur'an that were believed to be particularly efficacious in warding off evil. They could also bear all or some of the Divine Names, and the name of the Prophet, his family and Companions.

Occasionally, we find the Hilyah inscribed on an amulet. This example was probably made in the 18th or 19th century. The text reads: "The Messenger of God had a rosy complexion. [He had] dark eyes, large in shape and shining, with long lashes. He had beautifully arched eyebrows. His nose was curved. [His] teeth were slightly separated. He exuded radiance. His face was full. His forehead was wide. His chest was broad. His figure was perfect. He was of medium stature."

The lines are engraved in niqab within an inverted crescent, inside which are the names of the Companions of the Cave, the Askâb al-Kubrâ mentioned—though not named—in the surah al-Kubah (VII). Tradition has ascribed to them the names Tamîlikha (or Yamîlikha), Makulîna, Marnûsh, Dábrâsh, Shabînâ and Kafatârâyil, with their dog, Qimâz. The names of the Companions of the Cave are rarely found on Iranian amulets, though they are commonly used on Ottoman or Indian examples; the present item is therefore unlikely to be Iranian.

The other side of the amulet is engraved with Qur'ânic verses, from the surah al-Înshâ' (xxii, parts of verse 17), al-Saff (II, verse 131); al-Îkhtâl (xxi), and the 'Throne Verse' from the surah al-Râqib (xxii, verse 131).

Amulets such as this, inscribed with verses from the Qur'an, provide protection and good fortune. The text attests to the Prophet's physical characteristics—his rosy complexion, his dark eyes, and his long lashes. The Prophet's beauty was considered a source of inspiration for his followers, and his physical features were often praised in the Qur'an and hadith.

The Hilyah is a text that describes the Prophet's life and miracles, and is considered a source of guidance for Muslims. The text is often accompanied by illustrations of the Prophet's physical features, such as his rosy complexion and dark eyes, as seen in this amulet.
25

Small codex

Ottoman Turkey, perhaps 17th century
3 folios, 6.9 cm in diameter (5.7 cm including hinges); executed in naskh, 
tashbeh and nasta‘i, cut from or 
embossed onto leather or thin, 
unpolished vellum paper, mounted on 
letter which separate then part of 
embossed paper. Decorated with gold pigment 
and coloured dyes. Bound in dark brown leather, stamped and gilded, 
patterned with cloud-scrolls and 
spiralling arabesques, arranged con- 
centrically on the front and radially 
out the back of the vellum paper.

Accesion no. 3053.122
Published Geneva 1993, cat. 176

The recto of the first folio contains the "Throne Verse" from the surah 
al-Baqara (2, verse 255), embossed 
and mounted on paper illuminated 
with floral decoration; this is followed 
by verse 64 from the surah Yāsīn (36).

On the verso an embossed depiction 
of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina 
shows, among other features, the palm 
tree, the minbar, mihrāb, the Gūnta 
of al-Rahmah, al-Salam, and Jabra's 
and the holy maqāmāt (sires).

The recto of the second folio bears an 
embossed picture consisting of a 
view of the Haram al-Sharif at Mecca, 
under which appear the Companions 
of the Cave.1 Folio 4b has the 
name of the Prophet in tashbeh, 
with his attributes written in naskh, 
and folio 32 the name of God and some 
of His attributes; these continue on 
folios 4b–4a, where they are written in 
alternating dark- and light-coloured 
squares. The Hilyah is preceded on 
folios 4b by the surah al-Fatihah, 
written in fine nasta‘i and decorated 
with intricate floral designs. In the 
outer border flowers and foliage are 
drawn in black ink with red highlights 
on a gold ground.

The folio containing the Hilyah, 14, 
begins with the basmalah. Qur'anic 
verses are arranged in the outer quad- 
rants of the composition: reading 
anti-clockwise, these are al-Ankabūt 
(xxvii), verses 98–95; al-Qasid (xxvi), 
verses 51 and 52; al-Masā‘id (xxvii), 
verse 36 followed by a prayer; 
Maryam (xxv), verses 4–31, and Yūsuf 
(xxvi), verse 9.

The upper part of the composition, called the 'place of eminence' (bāz makan), was 
always devoted to the basmalah, usually in tashbeh or muhaqqaq. The basmalah often 
incorporates the first part of verse 30 from the surah al-Naml (xxvii), 'It is from Solomon 
and is [as follows]: In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.'

The section of the hilyah placed below the crescent begins with another Qur'anic quotation. 
The most frequently occurring verse is 'We sent thee only as a mercy for all creatures', from the 
serah al-Ankabūt (xxvii, verse 107); but another, from the surah al-Qasid (xxvi, verse 4), 
'And thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character', was also used. If the Hilyah has 
been divided into two sections, the latter comes after the Qur'anic verse. Sometimes the text ends 
with part 19,'... and he was the last of the Prophets', followed by the colophon.

Examination of the examples in the Khalili Collection shows that each portion of text 
was written on a separate piece of paper. These pieces— the central panel and all adjoining 
one—were then pasted down before being decorated. This seems to have been the normal 
way of producing a hilyah, and was adopted to avoid spoiling the whole composition by an 
error in one part.

All or none of the composition might be decorated. At its most basic, decoration consisted 
of medallions and rosettes marking different segments of the text. However, the text was 
more usually written within cloud cartouches over a decorated ground. The area of the central 
square surrounding the crescent, and the two rectangular panels at either end of the lower 
panel of text, were the points where decorative possibilities were greatest, and these could 
be elaborately embellished. The crescent shape was also finely illuminated in most examples.

The Hilyah was the subject of other compositions, notably in Iran, where the descriptive 
segments were accompanied by Persian translations.22 Iranian hilyahs do not have the same 
visual impact as the 'classical' Ottoman type, often being more like a list than a diagram in 
appearance. Furthermore, the description is often combined with other texts and is some- 
times covered with such an abundance of decorative detail as to make the Hilyah difficult to 
read. These Iranian hilyahs were sometimes accompanied by imaginary portraits of the 
Prophet's son-in-law 'Ali, and thus belong to a different visual tradition in which representa- 
tional painting played an important part at a popular level.23
The description of the Prophet is written inside a gold crescent. It is not the traditional version ascribed to 30, but reads: "His complexion was rosy. His forehead was large. His brows were wide. His face was round. His eyebrows were arched. His eyes were bright..." His eyes were blackish-black. His eyes were dark and large. His teeth were slightly separated. His nose was curved. His ears were small. His stature was perfect. His body was not hairy except from the centre of his chest to the navel. Between his shoulders was the seal of Prophethood." 

Around this appear Hiljabs of Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Ali and 'Uthman, 'Umar, and Husayn. These "verbal images" around the Hiljab of the Prophet appear as symbolic planets in orbit around their sun. Smaller circles around the crescent bear other names and attributes as well as Quranic verses. 

At some stage in the past, two of the folios (1 and 2) became detached and have been sown in again upside down. 

1. See cat. 24, above.

Most Hiljabs on paper would have been framed for hanging on a wall, either in a mosque, madrasah, or private dwelling. Sometimes Hiljabs on paper, like cat. 29, were glued onto shaped wooden panels so that they could be hung without the necessity of framing them under glass. But Hiljabs were created in other forms: they might be engraved on talismans, like cat. 24, a fine example on chalcedony, or embodied, as on one page of cat. 25, a small manuscript in leather.

The format of the Hiljab might also be adapted to show, in diagrammatic form, certain physical aspects of the Prophet. The Khalili Collection possesses an example, originally part of a manuscript, showing the mawr or khatim — the mark or seal of prophethood, which the Prophet bore between his shoulders (cat. 28). The description which appears on this Hiljab is taken from the Kitab al-Hiljab al-Sharif in the Traveller and Historian Shihab al-Din Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn 'Arabshah al-Dimashqi (d. 1450), at the point where the author describes the mawr referred to by 'Ali as a small bulge, red in colour, on the Prophet's left shoulder. On this mark could be discerned, in fine, black, hair-like lines the words Muhammad rasul Allah ("Muhammad is the Messenger of God"). This idea is elaborated even further in a 19th-century example in the Collection which shows the Prophet's effects or relics, the mawhallafat al-mawwiqiyah, depicting, alongside his Hiljab, his sword, rosary and banners, amongst other items (cat. 28).

The idea for such a composition arose from diagrams included in such works as the Dala'il al-Khayrat by Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Jazuli (d. 1465). This includes much information on the life of the Prophet according to the most reliable authorities. It seems probable that al-Jazuli, who was of North African origin, intended to include diagrams of the Holy Places in his text, as these appear in some of the earliest known copies. Occasionally, other "illustrations" were included, like the Prophet's sandals (ma'ad). Perhaps inspired by these copies of the Dala'il al-Khayrat, a fashion seems to have arisen in the Ottoman Empire during the 18th century for prayerbooks in which were included many diagrammatic and symbolic illustrations of places and objects associated with the Prophet. There are a number of examples of such prayerbooks in the Collection.

Perhaps the most interesting is MS 3504 (ex-catalogue), a du'a' nam ("prayerbook"), dated 26 Muharram 1167 (23 November 1753) and copied by a well-known calligrapher.
Ismail Yesari-zade. This includes not only descriptions of the Prophet and his Companions, but also diagrams and illustrations. On folios 6b–7a two magnificent calligraphic diagrams present specially selected names or attributes of God, which illustrate their centrality in the mind of the devout believer. The protective nature of these names is explained. Those on folio 6b are said to be effective in easing difficulties in all matters; those on folio 7a to act as a protection against the plague. Folios 7b–10a contain the "Divine Names" (al-Asma’ al-Husna) and the epitaphs of the Prophet. On folios 10b–11b there are biyadhs according to ‘A’ishah and Fatimah, in tabulated form with Turkish translations. On folio 14a there is an unattributed short version of the Biyadh and on folio 15a another unattributed description surrounded by the names of the Companions. Folios 15b–16a have biyadhs according to ‘Ali. Folios 16b–19a have other biyadhs, ending with that of Husayn, the Prophet’s grandson. The text includes a diagram and explanation of the mark of prophethood, with a comment attributed to ‘A’ishah that whoever carries the mubr al-nabatatub will be safe from a host of listed calamities (folios 19b–20b).

Other volumes in the Collection, such as a devotional manual, ms1138 (ex-catalogue), include pictures of the Prophet’s footprint, his hand, sword and ziyarat al-muntashib, the latter tree which grows in the Seventh Heaven down towards the Earth. By the beginning of the 19th century, the simple biyadh of Hafiz Osman had given rise to a vast array of imagery which had moved beyond the purely calligraphic to the diagrammatic and even illustrative. Perhaps those biyadhs with representations of Ali, whose account is the origin of the genre, mark the final stage. A new mental world was emerging as the 19th century progressed. The Islamic world was being drawn more and more into the orbit of Europe, with all the cultural compromise that this implied for the traditional societies of the Near East. This compromise is illustrated in the biyadh depicting ‘Ali in a landscape (cat.40), rendered in the techniques of European painting — shading, solidity of form, mathematical perspective; it is clinical and precise in a vain attempt to make time stand still.
Prophet and his
significant calli-
graphs which illustrate
trends and motifs of these names is
understood. In the
b. 13b there are
translations. On
folios 15a another
repetition with that of
folio 16a
involving the mark
mubtash (ex-catalogue),
which given rise to
the diagram-
like image of 'Ali, whose
name had been emerging
longer into the
fictional societies
of the Il-khanid.
In a landscape
silhouette the solidly of form,
maps of time stand still.
Structural embodiment
in
This remarkable hilyah is made in découpage or paper cut-out, a technique that was popular throughout the Islamic world. The main composition is inscribed within a large octagon, at the centre of which is another, tiny octagon from which a series of star figures has been generated. The largest of the eight-pointed stars overlaps with an unusual figure with eight oval lapses. At the top, a panel with curving ends contains the frequently quoted verse from surah al-Anbiya (xxx, verse 107), "We have sent thee only as a mercy for all creatures. Triangles, complementing the large octagon to form a square, contain the names of the Orthodox Caliphs. The short, unattributed description of the Prophet is written around the central star, in spaces created by the overlapping of the various figures.

He had a wide forehead. His beard was thick and rounded ... [7] His eyes were blue and black. ... [7] His brows were arched. His eyes shone. His teeth were slightly separated. He was handsome. His nose was curved. His face was brown. His hair was long. He had tapering fingers. His brow was large. His stature was perfect. His body was not hairy, except from the centre of his chest to the navel ... [7] His eyes were dark. He was of medium height.

The invocation "O Muhammad!" is repeated in the eight small squares around the central octagon. The gold-filled grounds of the intermediate eight-pointed star originally carried the repeated invocation "O God!", but only one of these repetitions remains intact. At the bottom of the page several diagonal lines of script include a Prophetic hadith attributed here to "Ali: 'Who sees my Hilyah after me, it is as if he has seen me.'

1. See below, p. 194.
Hilyah in the form of the muhar al-nabawwah
Ottoman Turkey, 16th century

9.7 x 15.9 cm (within ruled area); written in twelvemonth and ghubair in black ink on very thin, yellow wove paper, slightly polished and coated, 14.2 x 9.5 cm, decorated with polychrome floral scrolls, a wide gold border and rules in gold and black.
Accession no. CAL442

This loose folio must once have been part of a manuscript.

The composition on the recto follows that of a traditional hilyah. What it depicts however, is the muhar al-nabawwah, or "seal of prophethood" which the Prophet bore between his shoulders.

At the top of the composition an inscription in twelvemonth reads: "Ismail b. Hashim" (dsahib) of the seal of prophethood of Muhammad the Chosen One, followed by the tasdigh. Underneath, and extending into two vertical zigzag-shaped panels, is the complete description of the Prophet according to "Allah Most High." Between these two panels is a pink oval, representing the muhar, with a gold border. The oval bears the inscription: "Muhammad is the Messenger of God." Circles on either side of the oval contain the names of the Orthodox Caliphs. Below these panels of script reads: "Thus mentioned the learned Ibn Ar'ish in his book, "The Blessing of the Noble Hilyah," which he summed up by saying, "and between his shoulders is the seal of prophethood, which is a red bulge, situated closer to the left shoulder, surrounded by a dark shadow, on which, rendered in fine hair, Muhammad is the Messenger of God, May God bless him and grant him salvation."

The composition is decorated with boldly drawn blossoms over a blue ground with a white treble-dot motif. The upper panel of text is flanked by palmettes surrounded by blossoms, which are also used to decorate the title.

The painting on the reverse shows the mosque and city of Mecca in bird's-eye perspective. The border and decoration are identical to those on the recto, and both must be the work of the same painter.


Hilyah signed by Ebubekir ibn Ibrahim Pasha
Topkapi Palace, Istanbul, dated 1220 (AD 1785–6)

57 x 29.5 cm (within ruled area); written in musabqah, twelvemonth and musabqah in gold ink on thin, crease-coloured paper with a biscuit-coloured coating. Illumination in opaque watercolour, ink, gold and silver pigments.

Mounted on a wooden panel, 98 x 58 cm, with signs of fire damage. Outer margins sprinkled with gold and silver, with a view of Mecca in the top right corner of the panel.
Accession no. CAL461

This hilyah has been mounted on a wooden panel and has a small painting on paper at the top. Unlike many hilyahs that follow this format, the crescent area has not been cut and painted. Instead, the hilyah comprises three pieces of paper, rectangular panels at the top and bottom and a central square incorporating the crescent, which is highlighted in silver.

Apart from the quality of the script and the interest of the painting, it bears the signature of an officer at the imperial palace in Istanbul, Ebubekir ibn Ibrahim Pasha.

The painting, showing the Hecam al-Shari, is almost certainly taken from a copy of al-Jazuli's prayerbook for pilgrims to Mecca, the Dala'il al-ahzavat, which normally contains a representation of both the Ka'bah and the Prophet's mosque at Medina. As is normally the case in depictions of the Ka'bah, the walls are shown covered by a black cloth with gold embroidery, takrirumah.

The hilyah is written in an excellent hand. The musabqah is in musabqah script, the names of the four Orthodox Caliphs in a slender twelvemonth. All of these inscriptions are written in gold, as is the musabqah text of the Hilyah itself, which is in full description according to "Allah Most High." The names of the Caliphs are endorsed by irregular cloud cartouches. Finely painted floral scrolls fill the ground between the areas of text.

1. A similar example is in the Museum of Calligraphy, Beyazit, Istanbul, inv no. 1336.
2. There are fragments of a hilyah in the Khalili Collection, T.17594 and 5.
Ibrahim Paşa

Istanbul, 1751–6

This panel is mounted on a small panel, as a small panel, in the style of a small panel, and is known as the "Dâlim" or "Dâlim". The painting is a portrait of the Caliph al-Mu'izz, who was the son of the Fatimid Caliph al-Mustansir. The portrait is executed in a style that is typical of the period, with a symmetrical composition and a gold ground. The portrait is a masterpiece of the Ottoman miniature tradition, and is considered one of the finest examples of this genre.

The painting is in the Museum of the Arts of Istanbul, and is on display in the section dedicated to the art of the Ottoman Empire.
The Hilyah

30

Hilyah signed by Mehmed Tahir

Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

40.5 x 29.8 cm (within inner black rules); written in black ink on cream-coloured laid paper. Illumination in opaque watercolour, ink and gold. Mounted on card, 49.5 x 38.4 cm, painted with ultramarine with gold floral sprays.

Accession no. CAL.1459

Haci Mehmed Tahir Efendi (d. 1841) was one of the most brilliant students of Mahmud Ebulhacim, and is said to have surpassed his teacher in writing in the Jak or 'monumental' script. Haci Mehmed's fame and skill were such that he became the teacher of Sultan Abdülâmean (r. 1839-61).

Although this Hilyah has suffered some damage in the area around the head, it remains one of the finest in the Collection. The Hilyah is written in black ink, with floral decoration on cut-out paper. The remainder of the remainder of the lettering is and around the remainder of the composition. The names of the two orthodox Caliphs and a Qur'anic quotation from the surah al-Anbiyâ' (xx, verse 107) are also written in black ink. All of the pages in the Hilyah are published or surrounded by floral decoration. The main text of the Hilyah is written in black ink and consists of the complete description according to 'Ali.

There are small floral sprays between the lines. Rosettes and medallions mark the divisions of the text. In contrast to the profusion of decoration, the central gold crescent is left unadorned. The lower panel of the text is flanked by small rectangular floral sprays within cupped cartouches. The central square appears to be a single piece of paper, though the crescent may have been pasted on separately. The panels of floral and the panel of naqsh at the bottom are written on separate sheets.

1. For works by Ebulhacim in the Khalili Collection, see cat. 35 (VII), cat. 24. See also End 1970, p. 411; Radu, no date, p. 13.10, where the manuscript is reproduced.

31

Hilyah signed by Halil Şükri Nakşbendi

Ottoman Turkey, probably Bursa, dated AH 1339 (AD 1823-4)

40.5 x 30.5 cm (within outer rules); written in black ink on cream-coloured laid paper. Illumination in opaque watercolour, ink and gold. Mounted on card, 59.5 x 41 cm, painted with a floral chain in gold against an ochre ground.

Accession no. CAL.1031

Seyyid Halil Şükri Nakşbendi was a native of Bursa and a pupil of Seyyid Sulayman Vâhid Kâdirî from the same city. At least one manuscript in Şükri's hand, dated AH 1292 (AD 1875-6), is known.

Another, copied at Bursa in the same year by his teacher, is in the Khalili Collection.

This example of Şükri's work is enhanced by fine floral decoration. The Hilyah is written in Sufi script and flanked by floral sprays on a gold ground. The names of the Orthodox Caliphs and a Qur'anic verse from the surah al-Anbiyâ' (xx, verse 107) are also written in black ink. All of the pages are surrounded by floral decoration. The main text of the Hilyah is written in black ink and consists of the complete description according to 'Ali.

32

Hilyah by Mehmed Zâhid

Ottoman Turkey, dated 15 November 1810

40.5 x 28.8 cm (within inner gold rules); written in Sufi script, black ink and naqsh in black ink on cream-coloured laid paper. Illumination in opaque watercolour, ink and gold pigments. Mounted on card, 59.5 x 33.4 cm, painted with a floral chain in gold against an ochre ground.

Accession no. CAL.1553

Published Venice 1991, cat. 179

This Hilyah is in effect an examination piece, submitted by the calligrapher Mehmed Zâhid to his master, Mehmed Salih Şükri, and bears the latter's signature permitting Zâhid to practice (zâhid bi-waad al-arba'), together with the endorsements of three other calligraphers, Hafiz Ali Riza, Mehmed Hilmi and Mehmed Recai.

The Hilyah is written in Sufi script within a panel with cupped ends and bearing floral sprays. Here, the letter 'al' in the word al-rafi' has been shortened to fit within the niche of the word al-rafi'. On some occasions it was permitted to cross the final stroke of the niche. The text of the Hilyah is written in black ink and consists of the complete version according to 'Ali. The name 'Muhammad' occurs in the centre and is written in black ink, as are the names of the Orthodox Caliphs. An elaborate pattern around the central part of the Hilyah, consisting of blue, green and gold arabesque scrolls, appears to issue from small blue dishes placed around the central circle. This is an interesting re-working of an ancient motif which can be traced back through Islamic art to Sasanian art. A Qur'anic verse from the surah al-Anbiyâ' (xx, verse 107) is written in black below the main panel, within another cartouche containing gold floral sprays. The final part of the Hilyah is flanked by panels bearing polychrome quatrefoils.

At the bottom of the sheet are four inscriptions in rectangular areas, flanked by floral sprays, consisting of the calligrapher's signature and three endorsements. The calligrapher himself has not signed the piece, probably as a courtesy to his examiners.

The Khalili Collection possesses another zâhid issued by Mehmed Zâhid, dated 1814, to license his own pupil (cat. 22).

1. See the discussion of this documentation above, cat. 21.
偉く所詮の所詮

イスラームのため

ワアリスラームアラムハルアルクハミール
33 Hilyab signed by Ibrahim Alieeddin
Ottoman Turkey, dated 1286 (AD 1869–70)

34 Hilyab signed by Mehmed Hulusi and
illuminated by Osman Yumurri
Ottoman Turkey, dated 1315 (AD 1875–76)

35 Hilyab signed by Yahya Hilmri
Ottoman Turkey, dated 1504 (AD 1884–85)

43.5 x 24.6 cm (within ruleden border);
written in ashbâb and naskh in black
ink on silk, cream-coloured, wove
paper. Illumination in opaque water-
colour, ink and gold pigment.Mounted
on card, 53.5 x 23.2 cm, painted in
orange with a single gold rule, gold
crossed bands. Accession no. CAL.158

Ibrahim Alieeddin Bey, who was of
Caucasian origin, was born in 1844. He
was a pupil of Mehmed Seykî Bey, who
issued his Hilyab. He produced many
works on paper as well as designs for
monumental inscriptions.

Examples of the latter can be seen in
the Ortaköy mosque in Bursa and at
the Sultan Pasa mosque at Berkely.
The layout of this hilyab follows the
traditional format and includes the
complete version of the text according
to Thâ. A number of features deserve
mention: the central crescent is finely
decorated with floral ornament in red
over the gold, and the names of the
Orthodox Caliph are written within
ovals, rather than circular, shapes.
The cover is decorated with white
paint and has a verse from the surah al-
Naml (xxvii, verse 30) written in taqzîr
over the extended ste and within a floral
carved panel. The text of the Hilyab is
in naskh and consists of the complete
version according to Thâ. The circular
and rectangular sections of the text are
separated by the quotation from the
surah al-Qalam (lvii, verse 4). And
then [postscript] on an exalted throne
of character. The calligrapher has
signed his work at the bottom.

The subtly executed illumination consists
of two floral scrolls in white and
yellow which grow around the
central crescent from a green
dawn. The names of the Orthodox
Caliph are written within oval surmounted
by laurel wreaths. The panels flanking the
lower portion of text have abating
flowering bouquets of roses. The black
background forms a dramatic contrast
with the subtly painted hilyab, but its decoration
is kept to a minimum — abutted gold
palmettes joined by a double line — so
as not to overpower the text. The four
corners the transition between the
caliphate is made by means of an open
palmette with yellow ribbons work.

The illumination is the work of
Osman Yumurri (d.1859), who came
from Trabzon but worked as a scribe
and illuminator in the Sbaffar
Quarter, Bayazid.

This item is one of the few hilyabs
to bear the signature of its illumination,
here written in naskh, at the bottom of the
eripheral border.

Rado, no date, p.217.
Hilyah signed by Yusuf Fani Erzarumi

Ottoman Turkey, dated 1341 (February–March or April–May 1827)
16.7 x 12 cm (within inner rule);
written in gold, red, and black ink on thick, polished, cream-coloured, laid paper;
illuminated in black ink, red and gold pigment. Mounted on board,
34 x 23 cm, decorated with gold and coloured rules and frames.

Accession no. C.1279

This hilyah provides an example of a ghulat composition of the Prophet’s name. The name has been embellished
with flowers, leaves and stems, drawn in black ink with a hint of red pigment in several places. The names of the four
Orthodox Caliphs appear in the four corners of the sheet, written in shubb.[30]
The prayer ‘image’ of the Prophet is written around the central composition, in naskh. It consists of parts 1 to
19 of the version attributed to Ali.
Calligraphic compositions on the name of the Prophet are well known,
but the inclusion of the Prophetic Hilyah within such compositions is un-commented. On the other hand, the inser-
tion of the name of the Prophet into the middle of a hilyah is fairly common.[1]
This example is unlikely to be the work of a professional scribe. It was
probably made by someone as an act of personal piety.
The sheet may have been part of a larger composition, perhaps forming
a continuous curving cut-out edges can be
detected in the corners. The sheet has
been framed with gold and coloured
rules at a relatively recent date.

1. See cat. 32, for example.
Throughout the 16th centuries Ottoman artists devised no new designs for the hilya; nevertheless, it remained within the tradition of the hilya to depict a range of symbolic objects. Where the design from the tradition is in the centre, written from the north-west (q., verse 20): 'for every thing that Allah has created is by Allah's will.' This is written in a five-line line hexagon in the name of the Prophet the flower, while is written in a smaller hexagon. The difflugum composition is a dynastic movement. The word hilya according to pentagon, is described in the base and cost. At the top, with Isma’ilah taken from al-Nabi (xxxi, v. 37) and is his name of God, the name of the Prophet. In the base is verse 4 from the (xxxi, v. 37), And the seated standard of the Prophet and the name Caliph are written cotton.

According to the position was made who copied it from Nouz Elhab (160) here in the Crimea, assistant of Mehmed Hendi, both head of Isma’ilah and the rest.'

Throughout the 19th and early 20th century Ottoman calligraphers continued to devise new compositions; nevertheless, this is rare to find the format of the Hilyâb subject to such a dramatic reworking as that seen here. Is it not to be expected that the design departs radically from the traditional layout of a hilyâb in the centre, which carries a quotation from the surah al-Baqarah (2:282), a verse that speaks of God's power over all things. This is repeated five times, the five word letters from the word 'ala forming a five-petalled flower'. The name of the Prophet is placed within the flower, while the five word letters in 'ala create a small pentagon around it. This gul wara' or 'ala gives the whole composition a dynamic, rotating movement. The complete text of the Hilyâb according to Ali forms a larger pentagon, the description beginning at its base and continuing clockwise.

At the top, written in thulth, is the hâsmâlah taken from the surah al-Naml (27:58, verse 12). It is from the骑行的 (tâfârîk), in the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. At the bottom, also in thulth, verse 36 from the surah al-Qalam (68:16), is the name Allah and the names of the Orthodox Caliphs are written around the central section. According to the colophon, this composition was made by Ibrahim Edhem ibn Ahmed Rifat, a student of Mehmed Neviz and Sami Efendi, both leading exponents of thulth and tabrîq.
Albums of *muraqqaʾat*

Albums of *muraqqaʾat* are one of the most interesting and important phenomena of Islamic art. The word *muraqqaʾ*, plural *muraqqaʾat*, comes from the Arabic root *r.q.ʿ*, and means "to patch"; thus, *muraqqaʾat* are 'fragments' and a *muraqqa* is a "collection of fragments or patchwork", normally translated in English by the word 'album'.

The most famous Islamic albums are probably those assembled at the courts of the Mughal emperors in the 17th century, which represent the epitome of the tradition of album-making. A total of 11 of these survive, two from the reign of Jahangir (1605–27) and the remainder from that of Shah Jahan (1628–58). These royal Mughal albums were assembled according to a specific format. The openings alternate between two pages of calligraphy and two of paintings or drawings. The images were sometimes the work of famous artists of the past which the emperors and their offspring admired and collected; occasionally they were examples of the European prints which circulated in Mughal India; but most often they were the work of contemporary Indian or Iranian painters employed or patronized by the emperors. The examples of calligraphy were, in contrast, usually the work of earlier Iranian scribes, especially Mir ‘Ali Haravi (d. 1544–5) and Mir ‘Imad al-Hassani (d. 1611), though pieces by outstanding Indian masters like Muhammad Husayn Kashmiri (d. 1611–12) were also collected.

In the case of paintings, prints and drawings several examples might be pasted down on one page, with European and Islamic items placed side by side. But these disparate works, together with the examples of calligraphy, were integrated within the albums by the application of finely designed and executed borders, which were the work of specialized court artists. This way of presenting and decorating *muraqqaʾat* seems to have been an innovation of the Mughal court.

We cannot say precisely when the idea of assembling paintings and calligraphy in albums arose, as the earliest surviving collections of *muraqqaʾat* date from the 15th century. The work of early calligraphers like Ibn al-Bawwab (d. 1222) and Yaquq al-Mustaʾsim (d. 1298) must have been collected by connoisseurs and was quite probably assembled in this form, but no such early albums have survived. The earliest evidence for their existence in historical sources appears to date from the 14th century. ¹ The oldest known albums are the ‘Faith’ Albums in the Topkapı Palace Library, Istanbul.² These save the subject of much scholarly debate, but it seems to be generally agreed that most of the contents were put together in Tabriz during the Qaraqoyunlu and Aqqoyunlu periods before being brought to Istanbul during the reign of Selim I (1512–20). Many of the examples of calligraphy are signed and dated by masters who were active in the Qaraqoyunlu and Aqqoyunlu era. These albums are quite unlike the Mughal albums, having been assembled in an apparently hurried, almost haphazard, fashion. In addition to many fine 14th- and 15th-century Islamic paintings they contain numerous examples of Chinese and Central Asian origin.

Painting and calligraphy are also found side by side in another well-known album which was compiled for the Safavid prince Bahram Mirza, the son of Shah Ismaʿīl I (r. 1501–24).³ This had a more didactic purpose, being an attempt to show the history of Iranian painting down to the time of the album’s compilation in 1544. It commences with an introduction by a scribe in Bahram’s service, Dust-Muhammad, in which he endeavours to give the visual examples some kind of historical context.

¹ The ‘Lenangrad’ Album in the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, also contains paintings and calligraphy, principally of Safavid origin, together with some outstanding Mughal material. The album must have been assembled at the end of the Safavid period, for several of the borders bear dates in the 1740s and 1750s.³

The compilation of albums of *muraqqaʾat* seems to have been widespread in the eastern...
The phenomenon of calligraphy in the courts of the Mughal emperors (16th to 18th centuries) was an innovation and an expression of courtly and imperial power. Calligraphy as a form of expression and artistic achievement reached its peak in the courts of the Mughal emperors, where it was not only an aesthetic pursuit but also a symbol of the emperor's patronage and power.

The Mughal emperors were patrons of art and culture, and calligraphy was one of the many arts they supported. The Mughal emperors were known for their love of calligraphy, and they commissioned works from some of the best calligraphers of the time. The Mughal emperors also used calligraphy as a way to make their mark on their empire, and their seals and epigraphs were often written in calligraphy.

One of the most famous Mughal calligraphers was Mirza Ghiyasuddin, who was a court calligrapher of Emperor Akbar. Mirza Ghiyasuddin is known for his beautiful calligraphy, which is characterized by its fluidity and elegance. His works are still admired today, and they are considered to be among the best examples of calligraphy ever created.

In conclusion, calligraphy in the courts of the Mughal emperors was an important aspect of Mughal culture, and it continues to be an important art form in the Islamic world. It is a way to express beauty, creativity, and power, and it is a testament to the enduring influence of the Mughal emperors on art and culture.
concept of maraqqa‘t. This latter type was called a teribli muraqqa‘, by which was meant an ‘orderly assembled’ album, one written with a theme and in continuous order and not assembled from fragments. The album by Hafiz Osman in the Khalili Collection, cat. 58, is of such a type.

Albums may thus embody, not just the taste, and to some extent the personality, of their owners, but the taste and personality of the era in which they were created. Nineteenth-century Ottoman and Iranian albums, for example, contain material which indicates quite different mentalities. Ottoman calligraphy of this period represents one of the high points of the classical tawhīd, muqarnāq and naskh scripts. In Iran, on the other hand, while these scripts continued to be practised assiduously, Qajar albums were filled with examples of sikastašt, the best of which display a spirit of spontaneous experiment that was confined to the practice of karsalama among the Ottomans. In Iranian albums we find the interweaving of the past—the classic six hands and nasta‘liq—with contemporary virtuosity in the form of sikastašt.
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Maragqa'ar album signed by Yaqt al-Musta'si
Baghdad, 13th century

1 folio, 8.3 x 5.8 cm (overall). A line to the page, written in tawqif in black ink on polished, cream wove paper. Illumination in black ink, water-colours and gold on most folios. Mounted on pink laid paper backed with card and decorated with gold and black rules and borders with animal and floral motifs in gold.

Acc. no. CAL1

Yaqt al-Musta'si was undoubtedly the most influential of all Muslim calligraphers, being regarded by most later masters as their mentor. He is said by some to have been born in Hamayd at the beginning of the 13th century, and he became the slave of the last Caliph of Baghdad, al-Musta'si. After the latter's murder in 1229 and the capture of Baghdad by the Mongol Hulugis, he entered the service of the Hulugis' minister, Ata Malik Juvayni, to whose sons and brother he taught calligraphy. He died in Baghdad in 1294.

Yaqt's full name was Abu l-Majid (or Abu l-Dawr) Jamal al-Din Yaqt ibn 'Abdallah al-Musta'si, but he invariably signed himself 'Yaqt al-Musta'si' or just 'Yaqt'. Despite his influence over the art of calligraphy, there is as yet no definitive catalogue of his surviving works. Many manuscripts and separate items bear his name or attributions to him. One of the manuscripts with the greatest claim to be by Yaqt is in the Khulil Collection. This album, which may once have been bound in concertina form, consists of 11 siphurismi in Arabic arranged in an ordered sequence. They are written in a flowing tawqif hand, with each line rising to the left. Tawqif was normally a chancery script, and one with which Yaqt would have been familiar. But, as the example in cat. 43 shows, Yaqt also used tawqif for composing non-chancery pieces. Here, most diacriticals have been inserted, but any other orthographic signs seem to be included largely for compositional reasons. The signature on folio 11a, although slightly damaged, is undoubtedly part of the original. It is unlikely that the 13 folios would initially have formed an album of this type. They may have been part of a single manuscript, or else written on loose sheets, and were probably cut into panels and mounted in their present form during the first half of the 17th century, the decorated borders are executed in a 17th-century Safavid style. The birds depicted on the margin of folios 33 and 32 are in the style of the school of Riza-yi Ab'hasi at Isfahan. All of the illumination on cat. 41 was executed specifically for the margins of this album and the delicately painted motif in gold complement the calligraphy, which is sparingly decorated. Many of the text panels bear wavy floral chain decoration or the odd spray of blossoms, which were probably added in the 16th or early 17th century, before the text was cut into strips for inclusion in the present album. Only the ground of the opening panel, folio 12a, has received any more elaboration. The verses of several folios carry inscriptions in Persian. On folio 12b there is a line of rhymed prose. Folio 3b has six lines of verse on the pain of being in love. Folio 12b some verses by Shadi (d. 1301). Folio 13b bears a fragmentary inscription.

On folio 4b, a somewhat crudely executed watercolour in Qajar style shows a figure in European military or diplomatic costume of the first quarter of the 19th century. The identity of the figure is unknown, but it may be intended to depict one of the representatives of the various European powers in Tehran. 1

Page from a muqaddas 'iti album, signed by Abdallah Sayrah
Iran, 12th century

This page is a copy of an example by Ahmad ibn al-Suhrawardi. Another is based on a work by Abdallah Haravi and states that it was written in Samarkand during the last ten days of Ramadan 473 (October 1045 AD). It consists of an aphorism: "Riches come to the one who does not seek them, while the one who seeks them remains [forever] deprived." Abdallah Haravi's original was clearly the example on folio 7b of the Gawhar Sultan album: the entire composition—aphorism and signature—is identical. Whether the original by Ibn al-Suhrawardi copied by Haji Maqbad on this same page in the Art and History Trust Collection was also among the items which were to become the Gawhar Sultan album is not known. If it ever was, the example has been removed. But the suggestion is not entirely fanciful since among the surviving folios of the Gawhar Sultan album there is a related composition by Ibn al-Suhrawardi (folio 16b).

The page was written in black ink on dark blue paper. The text consists of Hadiths and an invocation calling down blessings on the Prophet and his family.

1. Qd.852, I. 71. 1922, cat. 25;

45
The Gawhar-Sultan album
Possibly originally assembled in India in the 17th century, now with material dating from the 19th to 18th centuries

This album contains more than 120 examples of calligraphic work, 26 of which are signed by or attributed to Ahmad ibn al-Suhrawardi (died 1040 AD), and the present form of the album consists of several smaller collections of different dates. All but one of the dated pieces were copied before 1145 (AD 1732-33), after which the final compilation must have taken place. The album was assembled in 1145 AD, and it was probably that the pages were initially collected. (The editor notes that confirmation of this comes from an interesting page of calligraphy in the Art and History Trust Collection which is the work of Haji Maqbad [Ali Mafrub], who spent his life in Tabriz and produced the inscriptions for a number of buildings in the city. Manuscripts in his hand are known from 1511 to 1561.) More importantly, he was a pupil of Al-i al-Din Tabrizi.

The album contains a variety of scripts in black, blue, yellow, red, and gold on laid and woven papers. Each folio consists of two such sheets, pasted back-to-back. Illumination in red, gold and opaque white colours.

The text consists of Hadiths and an invocation calling down blessings on the Prophet and his family.

45, folio 1b
calligraphy on this page is the work of Ahmad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Husayn al-Shirazi. It consists of a passage from the Qur'an, which is beautifully written in Persian script. The script is in black ink on a parchment background, and the page is decorated with intricate borders and floral patterns. The text is carefully aligned and spaced, making it easy to read. This page is part of a larger manuscript that was copied and illuminated in the 13th century. The manuscript is held in the collection of the British Library, and it is a fine example of Islamic art and script. The page is well-preserved, and the ink is still legible after centuries. It is a testament to the skill of the scribe and the endurance of the materials used to create it.
The album contains a number of manuscripts, illuminations, and calligraphic pieces. It is dated to the 14th century and comes from the Safavid period.

The center of the manuscript contains a calligraphic inscription in Arabic. The text is written in a stylized script typical of the period. The script is dense and ornate, with intricate lines and flourishes.

The text appears to be a passage from the Quran, written in the style of a calligraphic manuscript. The script is a form of naskh, which is characterized by its flowing lines and legibility.

The album is a significant contribution to the study of Islamic art and calligraphy. It provides insight into the artistic trends and techniques of the time.

The album is a valuable resource for scholars of Islamic art and history. It offers a glimpse into the cultural and artistic practices of the Safavid era.
assembled and the fragments mounted, for the last time, probably in India.

The album contains some pieces of illumination which are integral to the original calligraphy, though, in a number of cases, illumination of 17th- and 18th-century provenance has been grafted in as embellishment. All the illumination apart, perhaps, from that in the margins, is either Timurid or Tughluq.

The contents of the album embrace literature of several different types, all in Arabic. There are pieces of poetry, including a large fragment from al-Busi’s well-known poems in praise of the Prophet, the Qasidas al-Biarkan, aphorisms, hadiths, anecdotes, prayers, pieces culled from religious literature and numerous Qur’an fragments. For the purposes of this study, the discussion below is confined to those pieces signed by the following calligraphers.

Yaqut al-Musta’umi (d. 1298)8
Folio 124, dated 608 (AD 1218-19)

This piece is the final page from a prayer book. The colophon, at the bottom of the page, gives the date and states that Yaqut wrote it in the ‘City of Peace’ (Baghdad).

Folio 43 (upper left) and 53 (upper right)

Within inner black rules, 15.8 x 10 cm (48) and 15.8 x 9.5 cm (52); 10 lines, written in naskh in black ink on cream paper, probably laid. The ink was smudged before the pieces were mounted in the album. The text is on folio 43 consists of a hadith and Yaqut’s signature at the bottom. That on folio 53 bears the same hadith and has an identical colophon.

Ahmad ibn al-Suhrawardi11
Folio 10, dated 610 (AD 1289-90)

This colophon is probably the grandson of the famous Sufi author, Shihab al-Din ‘Umar ibn Abdullah. He was born in Baghdad, where he spent most of his life, and came into contact with Yaqut in Shiraz, where the latter was teaching. He is credited with a relatively small output of manuscripts, but these include one of the greatest masterpieces of Islamic art, the Qur’an produced for an unknown patron in Baghdad between 1305 and 1307.12 He was also responsible for the inscriptions on several buildings in Baghdad, including the Masjid al-Jami’.

Shamsa Bayyanghuri14
Shamsa al-Din Muhammad ibn Husam al-Harawi al-Bayyanghuri, or al-Sultani, was the teacher of Prince Bayyanghuri, the famous Timurid bibliophile, who died in 1433. He was a pupil of Ma’ruf al-Baghdadi and became master of all the calligraphic hands and of nasta’liq. His shubuk was superb, and for this reason he was entwined with producing the monumental inscriptions at the Makhsh shrine. His close association with Bayyanghuri at the Timurid court of Herat earned him his sobriquet. He died in 1446.

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Folio 18, dated Dhu’l-Hijjah 692 (November 1293)
24 x 17.8 cm (within blue band and head-piece); 10 lines, written in naskh in black ink on pale cream paper, probably worn, cut up into strips and passed down, having suffered some damage prior to mounting. Later illumination of loose leafy sprays in gold. The text contains advice on how rulers should behave. The script used indicates a link with chancery documents but, as three of the lines are occupied by the colophon, it seems probable that this example of Ibn al-Suhrawardi’s hand was written to order, or intended as a gift.

Abdallah Sayrafi14
Abdallah ibn Mahmud al-Sayrafi was one of the most famous calligraphers of the 14th century. He spent his life in Tabriz, where he formed a large number of illumination and calligraphy were often commissioned by the patrons of the Bayranghuri, the famous Timurid bibliophile, who died in 1433. He was a pupil of Ma’ruf al-Baghdadi and became master of all the calligraphic hands and of nasta’liq. His shubuk was superb, and for this reason he was entwined with producing the monumental inscriptions at the Makhsh shrine. His close association with Bayyanghuri at the Timurid court of Herat earned him his sobriquet. He died in 1446.

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3.1 x 8.6 cm (within blue band); 26.4 x 18.0 cm (excluding line 1), 8 lines, plus 4 diagonal lines in the colophon, written in naskh, shubh, and riq' in black ink on pale cream paper. Illumination in black ink, gold and opaque watercolours. Decorated with original gold rules and gold and blue zoontes.

The text is the final page of a poem, written in eight lines. It is probable that the top line originally belonged elsewhere; the rest are pasted up in strips and panels, but there is no doubt that the line does indeed exist which was folded along the vertical and horizontal axes for some time before it was mounted, as the paper has split along these lines. The quality of ink and the colour of the paper also differ in the first line.

Mubayy21

The calligrapher may be Mubayy Shariq, about whom little is known other than that his work is likened in quality to that of 'Abdallah Haravi and 'Abdallah Suryafl, and that he lived until ca. 980 (940 AD).

Folio 313r, dated the 10th day of Muharram 860 (10–12 December 1451)
3.1 x 8.6 cm (overall); 26.4 x 18.0 cm (excluding last line); 17.4 cm (last line only); 12 lines, including colophon, plus 1 from a different original, written in naskh, naskh, and riq' in black ink and gold, written on cream, candle paper. Unfinished illumination in black ink, blue and orange pigments.

The text consists of unattributed aphorisms in four lines of superb gold shubh, outlined in black, and three lines of naskh. The loops of many of the letters in shubh are decorated with delicate half-palmettes reserved against a blue background. The colophon is in five lines of naskh, written on cream, candle paper. The last line was probably cut from a page in an album of mashqas, for it contains the composite forms of the letter ha. It is, however, written in the same hand as the remainder of the text.

'Muballadah (a)

Folio 7a, dated Muharram 888 (October–November 1489)
29.3 x 21.2 cm (within blue band), 15 x 18.2 cm (central panel); 5 lines, plus 3 in the colophon, written in mashqas, shubh, naskh, and tawqif in black in the pale and dark cream coated paper. Illumination in black ink, gold and watercolours, with gold floral sprays and herbarium panels with blue arabesques, possibly later additions. This folio carries five fragments from unidentified sections, including two poems, in five lines which come from three, or possibly four, originals. The colophon is written in three lines of tawqif on the central section and states that 'Abdallah wrote in Herat. There is an illegible seal impression at the base of the signature. This sheet has suffered some damage along a vertical fold made prior to mounting.

'Ala' al-Din Tabrizi23

'Ala' al-Din Muhammad ibn Shams al-Din Muhammad al-Hafiz al-Tabrizi, also called 'Ala' al-Bag, was one of the famous 16th-century masters of Tabriz with his pupils, 'Ali Riza and 'Abd al-Baqi. He was the son and pupil of Shams al-Din Muhammad, the famous writer for Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–76). When the author Qazi Ahmad visited Tabriz in 1573, he commented upon his affability.24 He also mentioned that several building-including its illumination and decorations-written by 'Ala' al-Din. Several examples of his work on paper also survive and are listed by Mehdi Bayravii. Two of these provide further biographical information: in 1573 (AD 1573) he was at Kerbala 'in Iraq, where he was going to the shari'a court of al-Husayn ibn 'Ali; and in AH 1001 (AD 1592–3) he was in the Salavid capital, Qazvin.

Folio 21r, dated Ramadan 882 (December 1573–January 1574)
13.2 x 21.1 cm (central panel); 2 lines, written in shubh and naskh, plus 7 in the colophon, written riq' in black ink on blue-tinted laid paper. The text consists of lines of poetry. According to the colophon, 'Ala' al-Din copied the lines from calligraphy by 'Aqsaq al-Mustawi.

Folio 22r (centre, lower right),25 dated the end of Rabii II 914 (July 1576)
26.9 x 21.1 cm (within outer blue band); variable number of lines, but all in the signed fragment, written in shubh, naskh and riq' in black ink, red and orange pigments on cream laid paper.

The central panel is made up of four smaller panels of between eight and ten lines of naskh. They are surrounded on all sides by narrow strips containing aphorisms written in large shubh. The text consists of four lines of aphorisms, three pages of prayers and one from an unidentified literary work. The prayers are dated in the six-line colophon.

Folio 22b–23b
34.1 x 23.5 cm (within outer blue band); 22 lines, written in shubh, naskh and riq' in black ink (and gold on folio 23b) on laid paper of various shades of cream, pink, blue and grey. Illumination in black ink and gold pigment, with a herbarial-piece in opaque watercolours and gold (folio 22b) and gold floral sprays painted after the text was pasted down.

The text consists of verses from all parts of al-Tabrizi's poetry, the Qasidat al-Bardah. Each line was cut out and mounted separately, and, occasionally, a verse has been pasted in the wrong position. The colophon in riq' appears on folio 19r. It is also written on a separate slip of paper, which looks similar to that of some of the verses but appears to be the only paper which has cracked along some old fold lines, so we cannot be certain that it is from the same original manuscript. The trip carrying the karahnamah on folio 17r carries the remembrance of the impression of a large round seal from the time of either Jahangir or Shah Jahan.

Folio 20r, dated 897h/1579–80
26.7 x 18.5 cm (within blue band, excluding top line); 11 lines, including a line colophon, written in shubh, naskh and riq' in black ink on beige, laid paper. Illumination in black ink and gold pigment, with gold floral scrolls added later. The text consists of philosophical, moral and political aphorisms and is signed and dated. The page has three seal impressions of Gohar-Sultan, the daughter of Shah Isma'il II.

Folio 21b (upper section),26 dated 907/1597–98
22.7 x 23.5 cm (within inner border); 11 lines, including a three-line colophon, written in shubh, naskh and riq' in black ink on cream laid paper, tinted pale blue. Ruled in black ink and gold pigment, and interlined in blue. The text consists of two lines of poetry with three lines of explanation beneath each. According to the line consists of riq', the lines were copied after Aqsaq al-Mustawi.

Folio 22b (upper section)
13.5 x 23.5 cm (within blue border); 10 lines, including the colophon, written in shubh, naskh and riq' in black ink and gold pigment on cream paper, probably laid. Ruled in black and gold, with a gold background. The text consists of moral and philosophical aphorisms, with some associational material in the centre of the page.

Two writings of 'Ali ibn al-A'la Talā'ī are written diagonally in six lines, with an updated, single-line colophon including the script's name in riq'.

Folio 26b (upper section)
9.3 x 23.5 cm (within blue band); 4 lines, plus a 3-line colophon, written in shubh, naskh and riq' in black ink on polished, coated cream paper. Ruled in black ink and gold pigment, with interliner gold leaves added later. The text copied by 'Ala' al-Din forms an epigraphic introduction, with an updated colophon in riq'.

'Abd al-Raqi (Danishmand) Tabrizi27

This calligrapher was the pupil of 'Ala' al-Din Tabrizi. He left Iran to live in Baghdad, but was forced to return by Shah Abbas (r. 1587–1629). The shubh inscriptions around the portal of the Masjid-i Shah in Isfahan are his work.28

Folio 24b, dated 999h/1690–91
32.7 x 24.4 cm (within blue band), 13.5 x 24.4 cm (slightly smaller, signed panel, below); 15 lines, including a 4-line colophon, written in shubh, naskh and riq' in black ink on cream and beige paper, the lower panel coated. Ruled in black ink and orange, red and gold pigments; the polychrome medallions are later. The text consists of part of a poem followed by a five-line panel of aphorisms, which also carries a colophon in two diagonal lines of riq'.29

Folio 25r (lower panel)
26 x 23 cm; 6 lines, written in riq' and naskh in black ink and gold pigment.
لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله
فلكيكم كعب بن عائشة شهدت على
والله أنني أخطىء ورضونا الأم
نعم نطيب لهوي فارق وولى
بالله فإن الحوار ممتعة من الله
علي نفسي أن أصلي مسنوع الوساطة
on very thin, off-white paper. Ruled in black ink and gold pigment.

The text is part of a poem in six lines, "with an undated colophon in gold script" outlined in black. This is one of the few instances in this album where the writing on the verso of the original paper shows through to the recto.

Haji Shams al-Din 'Ali al-Rashid al-Shirazi
Folio 1b, dated 1026 (AD 1618–19) and marked with a 4-line colophon, written in black ink on off-white coated paper.

Undecorated.

The text consists of verses followed by an anecdote concerning Abu 'Abd al-Malik al-Tabari, son of Abu 'Abd al-Malik ibn al-Sayf, the poet.

"al-Ruf"—perhaps standing for the date 1026–19 (AD 1618–19).

Concordance of present and original folio numbers in cat. 43

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present folio</th>
<th>Original foliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abdallah al-Talibi
Folio 3b, dated 1311

(AD 1699–1700)

16.5 x 10 cm (lower left); 11 lines, written in gold in black ink on pale cream paper, probably wore.

Undecorated.

These ten lines of poetry were copied from some written by Ya'qub al-Musta'sim. The colophon at the bottom is somewhat smeared.

Muhammad
Folio 10b (lower left)

16.6 x 11.5 cm; 16 lines, written in gold in black ink on blue-tinted paper. Illumination in gold with some gold sprinkling.

The page contains amsor, unattributed apart from one by Abu al-Hasan al-Shafi'i al-Madina, on "A 'lma' in Rabi' al-Madina.

Muhammad Husayn al-Husayni
Folio 10b, (upper panel),

dated 1121 (AD 1712–13)

21.4 x 16 cm; 26 lines, written in gold in black ink on off-white laid paper. Undecorated.

This text consists of a group of religious sayings, including some Qur'anic material, in the form of a rijal mashay.

1. The folio numbers are written in the original album margins, and in most cases have been ruled over in blue. Some are numbered in the Indian manner with an extra zero; for example, folio 10b bears the number 1200. The same system was followed when the earliest surviving Arabic copy of Rashid al-Din's Jami' al-sawarikh, a fragment of which is in the Khalili Collection, was re-told in India. See Blair 1995, pp. 31, 32.

2. See below, p. 90; see also M.'s manuscript 1527, nos. 301, 302 for another version of the same seal impression. She should not be confused with Gwairz-Sultan, the daughter of Shah Tahmasp and wife of his nephew, Ibrahim Mirza, governor of Mashhad, who was murdered by Imam 'Ali in 1172; see Qazi Ahmad-Minorsky 1939, p. 4.

3. There is an illegible seal impression on folio 8a.


7. Illumination on folio 8b: Safavid head-piece; on folio 10b: Timurid or early Safavid head-piece; on folio 12b: Safavid head-piece and floral motif; on folio 24b: Safavid medallions; on folio 24a and 30b: Safavid panels; on folio 28b: Timurid or early Safavid fragment; on folio 31b: 16th-century Safavid fragments; on folio 33b, 34b and 35b: Timurid fragments.

8. For a discussion of Ya'qub's work, see James 1992, pp. 18, 19. For his biography, see cat. 41, above.

9. The phrase al-badad li'llah ("Thanks be to God").

10. Radio, no date, p. 70.


13. Folio 10b carries the original folio number 101, but as the recto is blank, it bears little trace of anything pasted up, it was obviously intended to go at the beginning of the album at some stage in its history.


15. Qazi Ahmad-Minorsky 1939, pp. 67, 68; Bayani 1345–46, II, pp. 315–17, nos. 40, 41; Thackston 1969, pp. 124, 125 and 124, n. 11.


17. Qazi Ahmad-Minorsky 1939, p. 27. For more information, see Huart 1972, p. 105.

23. 'Ali al-Din's full name does not appear on this page, which is damaged leaving only the word ... dadari. But, according to the original foliation, the
see Qazi Ahmad-
keel's impression
173, p. 403 and

Yuskovsky 1999,
also in Safavid
1981, Timurid or
1984, on folio 10b
and floral motif;
but also on folio 7
and Haft Pain;
and early Safavid
in the 16th century
in folio 37b, 34b
and
Yasu'a's work,
1981, 199. For his
above, 

Ishaq b.'Allab

770.
9, 88.
38-52.
be the original folio
that went in black, if
anything pasted-
intended to go
the album at some

Jackson 1999.

1992, cat. 25.
Yuskovsky 1999,
45-56, in
Thickston 1989,
in 12.
Yuskovsky 1999,

p. 147,
forms a double
latter is not
or consecutive
15, and at

1999, in

Ishak b.'Allab

Ishaq b.'Allab

Ishaq b.'Allab

Ishaq b.'Allab

Ishaq b.'Allab

Yuskovsky 1999,

p. 147,
forms a double
latter is not
or consecutive
15, and at

1999, in

Ishak b.'Allab

Ishaq b.'Allab

Ishaq b.'Allab

Ishaq b.'Allab

Ishaq b.'Allab

Yuskovsky 1999,

p. 147,
forms a double
latter is not
or consecutive
15, and at

1999, in

Ishak b.'Allab

Ishaq b.'Allab

Ishaq b.'Allab

Ishaq b.'Allab

Ishaq b.'Allab

Yuskovsky 1999,
Four pages from an album of muqqa'āt

Iran, 18th century, perhaps assembled in its present form in 17th-century India

Dust-Muhammad ibn Heran, dated Shawwal 933 (February–March 1723)

14 lines to the page, 30 x 19 cm (within blue border); written in thuluth, naskh, and naskhī in black ink on thin, cream-coloured laid paper. Illumination in opaque watercolour, ink and gold pigment. Mounted on board, 33 x 24.7 cm, covered with a wide blue band with narrow gold leaves in a chain and an outer border of gold and coloured rules and marbled paper.

Accession no. GAL227

The calligraphy on this page is by Dust-Muhammad, who worked during the reign of Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–76). He is best known for his short treatise on painters and calligraphers which was written at the beginning of an album assembled in 1544 for Tahmasp's brother, Tahran Mirza, whom he served as librarian. A number of manuscripts and pieces of calligraphy in his hand are known, including a copy of the Qur'an produced for Tahmasp in A.H. 948 (A.D. 1545–61), now in Qum. The earliest recorded example of Dust-Muhammad's work is a qur'an dated A.H. 938 (A.D. 1535–36) but, as the Shahīl page shows, Dust-Muhammad was active at least two decades earlier.

The page is divided into seven sections, four of thuluth, two of naskh, and a colophon in naskhī. The script within each panel is painted inside dark green borders. This ground is decorated with floral sprays in crimson and pale blue. In some cases the final words at the end of a line of thuluth have been inserted in the side panels, written diagonally in naskh. In the third line of thuluth, for example, Dust-Muhammad has written 'In vain utter my soul in anticipation... Hope.' He has completed the composition with the word 'ayn ('life') and written the final words as a diagonal line of naskhī above.

The present colophon inscription bears comparison with a very similar example by the Ottoman calligrapher, Ahmed Karabıurı, dated A.H. 944 (A.D. 1537–8), which takes an almost identical format and is also written in naskhī. Although little is known about Karabıurı's connections with Iran, other Dust-Muhammad was a pupil of Sayyid 'Abdallah Rikani and was influenced by Iranian calligraphy of the late 15th and early 16th centuries, this colophon provides another piece of evidence to support such a link.

The decoration of the side panels is typical of Iranian illumination in the first half of the 16th century. The dark blue outer borders of these pages, the blue bands with a repeating cross motif which decorate the panels and the pale blue and crimson sprays on the gold grounds of many panels may have been executed in India.

Pir Muḥammad ibn 'Arabshāh

Iran, 16th century

9 lines to the page, 32 x 23 cm (within blue border); written in thuluth and naskhī in black ink on thin, cream-coloured laid paper. Illumination in opaque watercolour, ink and gold pigment. Mounted on board, 33 x 24 cm, decorated with a wide blue band with narrow gold leaves in a chain pattern and an outer border of gold and coloured rules and marbled paper.

Accession no. GAL109

This page has seven lines of thuluth and two of naskhī. The first and fourth lines of thuluth consist of hamsahādī which conform to the traditional shape described by al-Qalqashandi in, for example, the presence of an elongated ligature from the letter ṭīn and the assimilation of the muqna and nu of al-rakabīn. The phrase wa la hikma thiqat ('in 1. Kinn 1 confide') is attached to the left of the first hamsahādī. Although this may appear a little cramped, it was a well-known composition and several other examples exist. The sentence wa la tawfiq illa bi'llah ('my success comes only through God') is appended to the second hamsahādī and this, too, forms a recognized composition.

The second and third lines of thuluth relate a question asked of the Greek physician Hippocrates (al-Bayhaqī), 'What is humaneness?', and the answer 'Humility in power, forgiveness in strength, offering without expecting reward and generosity in poverty.'

Between these two lines are two more in naskhī, which again contain the phrase 'Umar's reply when asked about the sources of tribulation and anguish: 'To the people, 33.5 x 23.5 cm, decorated with a wide blue band with narrow gold leaves in a chain pattern and an outer border of gold and coloured rules and marbled paper.

Accession no. GAL151

The page bears a hamsahādī in muqqaqāq, followed by three more lines in muqqaqāq and three in thuluth. The lines of muqqaqāq provide a fine example of this script, which was most often used for copying the text of the Qur'an.

The second, third and fourth lines contain a quotation from the Sufi al-Shi′î: 'People are of three types: the compassionate person (mawṣulīn) – his character is marked by obedience; the selfish person (ṣufāsī) – his character is marked by a desire for food and drink; the devilish person (aṣṭānī) – his character is marked by cruelty.

The next three lines are in an elegant thuluth and it is instructive to compare them with the muqqaqāq above. The essential difference is the way in which the sub-linear letters are written. In muqqaqāq, these are flattened out and

43. dust of soil impressions on folio 27a
These are two more...
Page of *maraqqa‘at* signed by ‘Abdallah
*Tomb of Hasan Abdal*,
dated sal 1168 (AD 1755–6)

A *maraqqa‘at* is a collection of poetry, written in imitation of the style of Jami. This *maraqqa‘at* is signed by ‘Abdallah, known for his poems of praise for the **Tomb of Hasan Abdal**. The text is written in black ink on thin, cream-coloured laid paper. Illumination in opaque watercolours, gold and gold pigment. Mounted on board, 38.9 x 23.1 cm, decorated with a wide blue band with narrow gold leaves in a chain pattern.

**Accession no. CAL.126**

These lines are part of al-Busri’s poem, the *Quzait al-Burdah*. The excerpts in *shubih* and *naskh* are taken from different points in the poem. The lines of *shubih* vary in length and thickness and may be from more than one manuscript. Only the bottom line is not gold-spangled. In general the page has been patched together carefully but in several cases the joins are obvious. Occasionally, as in the case of the letter *ha* in the fourth line of *shubih*, the sub-linear strokes have been cut out and stuck down over the blue borders which demarcate the panels of *naskh*.

2. For details of recorded work by Dast-Muhammad, see Bayani 1341-42, no. 317, pp. 188-190; see also Thackston 1989, p. 33; and Soudavar 1992, p. 218 n. 74.
3. The last panel of *shubih* appears to be by a different scribe and is written on paper of seemingly greater age. Karahisi’s colophon has been reproduced on several occasions. For example, see Rado, no. 7, p. 72.
5. For Decasan patrons of Iranian calligraphy, see James 1987.
6. Al-Qulqashandi, n. 333-34.
8. See Rado, no. 7, p. 72, for two identical examples.
لا يمكنني قراءة النص العربي من الصورة.
46
Album page with Qur'anic verses
Iran, mid-16th century

Six lines to the page, 13 x 8.3 cm (central text panel); written in nasta'liq in black ink on cream and pale blue paper, laid and wove respectively. Ruled in black ink, gold and coloured pigments and gold-spangled. Mounted on orange, cream and beige laid paper and brown cardboard, 36 x 26.7 cm, decorated with a polychrome head-piece (cut and pasted separately) and polychrome and gold rousette verse-markers.

Assessment no. GAL.77
Exhibition: Geneva 1995, ex-catalogue

The text in the central panel consists of quotations from the surah al-Fath (ch. 4, verses 1–3 and part of verse 4). It is written in nasta'liq, a script which was only very rarely used to copy out the Qur'an. Only a small number of examples are known, the most famous being a Qur'an copied by Shah Mahmud Niasargari (d. 1564), now in the Topkapi Palace Library. However, the verse of the present item has no text, so it could not have been taken from a copy of the Qur'an, although in one corner, outside the panel, the catchword inscribed ("Fatih") indicates that the rest of verse 4 followed on the next recto page. The central section may have been written out as a prayer before being cut up and mounted in an album. Alternatively, it may have been intended for an album from the first; other album pages similar to this one are known.

The text in naskh in the margins is from the surah Yac-in (xxvi, verses 1–19). The knotted rousettes in the marginal text are of a type found in 16th-century Herzi Qur'ans. The illuminated head-piece is of Ottoman or Iranian origin.

Alman page, signed by Muhammad Riza Tabrizi
Iran, dated A.H. 898 (A.D. 918)

11 lines to the page (central panel only), 23.5 x 13.7 cm (including illuminated border), 19.4 x 9.7 cm (within orange rule); written in nastaʿlīq and ḥarh-i-muʿtashāmī in black ink on cream paper, probably vellum. Mounted on pink, laid paper with margins of yellowish and pale orange laid paper, 33 x 22 cm, decorated with gold and coloured rules and azbique panels in yellow and pink.
Accession no. CA2437

This page, once bound in an album in concertina format, is the work of a 16th-century Iranian calligrapher, Muhammad Riza Tabrizi. In 1584 he emigrated to Istanbul, where his work became highly regarded, though he returned to Tabriz before his death.1 The text in the central panel is written in Persian and is a panegyric on the importance of good disposition and good deeds. The panels around the border, from a different original, are verses which pour scorn on hypocrites.

1. Several examples of his work are listed by Mehdi Bayani, but the present item is later than any of these. Conflicting dates are given for both Muhammad Riza Tabrizi's journey to Istanbul and his death, and the piece may therefore, have been executed in Turkey. Compare Bayani 1341-52, 75, pp. 726-8, nos. 1041 and 1044 and Haart 1988, p. 248.
Page of maraqqa‘at signed by Yari and others

Iran, 16th century, probably re-margined in India in the 18th or 19th century

28.4 x 17.4 cm (within orange border); written in black ink, naskh, nasta‘liq and nasta‘liq in black ink on cream, polished and coated paper. Illumination: In black ink, gold and coloured pigments. Mounted on card, 38 x 28 cm, decorated with a border of pale orange, laid paper with a pinkish floral scroll and stencilled blue margins with a reserved floral scroll outlined in gold. The orange cartouches are of paper, pasted on, and decorated with linear scrolls in gold or portraits in two cases. Accession no. CAL.48

This well-organized page contains examples of six scripts. At the top, the hamladah is written in nash‘. Four lines of naskh in praise of the Prophet introduce part of a hadith, the continuation of which is written below in one line of mushafiq. On either side of the panel of naskh are three lines of riyāshī, written diagonally. This example of riyāshī is a competent hand that provides a useful comparison to the adjacent naskh, in particular the form of the letters ۵۶۹. nasta‘līq and minasi, which are less curved and point slightly downwards. Underneath this a prayer is written in naskhī, followed by four lines of black nasta‘līq on the theme of royal power as the gift of divine power. In the side panels, a hadith of ‘Ali b. Abī Talib is written diagonally. The last panel is signed in nasta‘līq by Nur al-Dīn, a calligrapher who seems to be otherwise unknown.

The margins contain two fragments of paintings, one showing the head of a youth and the other that of a girl wearing a headdress. Both appear to be of 16th-century Shirazi provenance.

Page of maraqqa‘at attributed to Yaqut al-Musta‘sim

Perhaps Bengal, 13th century, but remarginated in India in the 17th century

6 folios, 8.7 x 11 cm (average area of text in naskhī), 4 x 18 cm (average area of text in mushafiq); 2 lines to the page, written in mushafiq and riyāshī in black ink on cream, coated paper, probably four leaves. Illumination on folio 2a in black ink, opaque watercolour and gold. Mounted on several layers of tissue, though laid paper, 40.5 x 29 cm, decorated with gold and coloured rules, and gold and polychrome illumination. Borders of gold floral decoration on blue, yellow or pinkish grounds. Accession number CAL.128

The album contains a series of questions directed to the Sassanian ruler Kiya Aznawuriyas (Khosrow Anushirvan, r. 531-793) and his responses. Numerous examples of this popular text exist, including several others in the Khalili Collection. It is written on six folios, each of which carries two lines of mushafiq and seven lines of another script, which, until recently, would have been wrongly identified as naskhī, as is the script of the Qur’an attributed to Ibn al-Bawwab in the Chester Beatty Library. A close look shows, however, that it is written in a clear riyāshī. On folio 6a the attribution appears under the final line of mushafiq: ‘Written by Yaqut al-Musta‘sim’. This is a later inscription, though the paper of the original fragments is clearly very old and is stained, worn and damaged. The passages in mushafiq and riyāshī form continuous texts. All the text panels have been numbered. It seems probable that at some point the pages were split for mounting in an album, perhaps when they were assembled in their present form. The ‘verso’ are blank.

The original text was undecorated but has received the most sumptuous mounting, in a style and technique that bears all the hallmarks of the royal atelier of the Moghul emperor Jahangir (r. 1605-27). The wide margins are decorated in a similar fashion although with different flowers. The central panels of riyāshī are surrounded by flower chains of various designs, while the outer borders are covered with naturalistically drawn plants and flowers that are characteristic of the borders in the royal albums of both Jahangir and Shah Jahan (r. 1627-58). Comparison
وَالْرَّفْوَةٌ وَأَمَامَةٌ عَالِمَةٌ فِي كَفَّةٍ

الاذى وحنى المعاشرة وتله اجها
51 Album of maraqqa’āt
signed by ‘Abd al-Majid
Iran, Isfahan, dated Ramadān 1180
(February–March 1767) and 1185
(1767–70)

4 folios, concertina-bound, area
within inner rule 14.2 x 9.9 cm (14),
12.7 x 9.7 cm (14a), 14.3 x 19.8 cm (15),
14.2 x 8.5 cm (16); variable number
of lines to the page, written in šibkastāb
in black ink on tinted woven paper;
illumination in black ink and gold
glitter. Mounted on boards,
20 x 14 cm, decorated with gold
and multi-coloured rules and inner and
outer borders in contrasting colours
painted with gold floral scrolls.
Binding of red leather with blind-
tooled ruled borders.
Accession no. 108597

These pages are the work of ‘Abd al-
Majid, known as the Devshir of
Telghan and one of the most highly
esteemed exponents of šibkastāb.
His contemporaries considered him
one of the greatest masters of this
difficult script, but ‘Abd al-Majid died
in extreme poverty in Isfahan in 1777 at
the early age of thirty-five.1 The bulk
of his work was done in the last
15 years of his life.

Šibkastāb developed from nasta’liq,
which is itself derived from kufic
art, and was widely used by Iranian calli-
graphers in the 18th and 19th centuries.
These scripts were undeniably the
most important Iranian contributions
to the art of calligraphy. Among the
many varieties of the Perso-
Arabic script, šibkastāb was the most
formal, and perhaps the most ingenious.

Šibkastāb script had its own complex
rules, including several combinations
for which ‘short-hand’ symbols were
employed.2 An overall impression
is one of spontaneity, in contrast to the
carefully planned compositional tech-
niques which characterize contempo-
rary Ottoman calligraphy. Šibkastāb
has more in common with the art of
drawing in Iran than any other script
except nasta’liq.

In this album folio 3a, dated Ramadān
1180 (February–March 1767), is
presented in a relatively traditional
format. Here, ‘Abd al-Majid expresses
his devotion to an unidentified person.
The script is of uniform size and is
written diagonally, after the fashion of
verses in nasta’liq.

The remaining three folios are much
more freely written. The script on
folio 12a is in two sizes and is written
in different directions, overlapping at
several points. In the top left-hand
corner the technique of ṣiyāḥa masbūq
is employed, the letters being written
on top of one another. The text of
this larger script says that the commis-
nioned copy was produced for one Amanullah Khan, who
was sent to him in the year 1183
(1769–70). Among the smaller
inscriptions, the most interesting con-
tains a letter from ‘Abd al-Majid, who
describes himself as a šibkastāb nigar
(‘šibkastāb writer’), to Muhammad
Ibrahim, a bookbinder (‘ablib), and
Mīrza Ismā‘l, the chief of the army
supply department (sar vaqafval),
concerning his regular draft salary.

Folio 2a, also dated 1186–70, carries
another letter from ‘Abd al-Majid plead-
ing for money, while folio 4a, which is
undated, contains a series of complaints
about his life and circumstances.

The verses of these folios contain
attestations by ‘Abd al-Jawad ‘Arqā
Iṣfahānī praising the work of ‘Abd
al-Majid, who is referred to as ‘the
deceased’. ‘Abd al-Jawad taught
several Qajar princes in Isfahan and
Telghan and seems to have worked in
the library of Muhammadshah
(1134–48).2

An interesting feature of šibkastāb
in general, exemplified here, is a
gradual change in the intensity of
the ink in different parts of a composi-
tion. The subtle gradations of ink tone
within a single stroke clearly played an
important part in the overall appear-
ance of the script.

2. Folio 3b also bears the impressions of
of two seals, dated 1122–3 and
1160–1; see p. 340, below.

52 Album containing the surah
al-Fātihah, signed by Muhammad
Kazim
Iran, dated 1317 (1792–3)

9 folios, within inner rule
16.2 x 35.5 cm (largest page),
17.4 x 35.2 cm (smallest page); 1 line
to the page, written in nasta’liq in gilded-
style in black ink on polished, wove
cream paper, painted with gold pigment.
Mounted on board, 29 x 39.5 cm, deco-
rated with green, gold, blue and orange
rules and a single wide blue band.
Accession no. M55159

The beauty of the Perso-
Arabic script is intrinsic; it can be appreciated on
formal grounds alone. But 19th-
century Iranian taste often seems to have
demanded a little more.

Sometimes inscriptions were written
over a ground of densely painted natu-
ralistic detail, often showing pastoral
scenes.1 Another popular manner
of embellishment was gudarz, meaning
‘rose garden’ or ‘full of flowers’. In this
technique, which was usually applied
to nasta’liq, the script was written in
outline and then filled with floral
and naturalistic decoration. The technique
of filling letters with decoration may
have originated in the practice of
writing a phrase such as the humaydah
and then filling it with minutely
written verses from the Qur’an.

Here, the first surah of the Qur’an,
al-Fātihah, has been written in the form
of an album, its seven verses mounted
on nine separate boards. This surah is
regarded as the ‘Essence of The
Book’ giving knowledge of God, His
attributes, His relations to mankind,
and His creation. In this example the
treatment gives the impression of a
garden of tranquillity. The decoration
is largely floral, but animals and birds
are also located at intervals within the
letters and diacritical marks.

The figures are reserved against a
striped ground. This technique, using
tiny dots rather than lines to render the
forms of the letters, was first popular-
ized by the 17th-century painter,
Muhammad Zaman, and by the begin-
ing of the Qajar period, in the late
18th century. This method was used
by many painters. The script is set in
cloud cartouches over a gold ground
surrounded by coloured rules. On
folio 13, three cloud cartouches in
the form of flowers have been placed
above the text.

Folios 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8 are signed
and dated by the calligrapher,
Muhammad Kazim.1 The signatures
are incorporated into the final letter
on each folio and treated in the same
way as the decoration.

1. See, for instance, Geneva 1988,
p. 128, no. 32.
2. See, for example, cat. 139, below.
3. Mehdi Bayani mentions two calli-
graphers called Muhammad Kazim; see
Bayani 1345–58, 11, no. 3115, pp. 835,
841, no. 669, p. 178.
In the final letter, the same

Geneva 1988,

cat. 130, below.

arabesque two callig-

graphy Kazim; see

no. 1215, pp. 833.

4.

35, folios 29 (above) and 30 (below)
Mir Ali Hava was a renowned poet and a prolific manuscript writer in 17th-century Iran. He is known for his excellence in calligraphy and was well-respected by both the Bukhara and Isfahan courts. Mir Ali is known for his poetry, which was collected by the Jahangir in 1609-12, and his calligraphy is considered to be of high quality. His works are admired and collected by several Mughal masters.

The first folio contains work by Mir Imam, a well-known calligrapher, in kufic script. The second folio contains a poem by Mir Imam, which is also in kufic script. The calligraphy is beautiful and expressive, with the use of gold and other materials to enhance the visual appeal. The pages are decorated with intricate designs and patterns, typical of the Mughal style.
53 Alumni of muraaqa‘at signed by Mir ‘Ali Haravi, Mir ‘Imad al-Hasani and others

Iran, 16th–17th century, assembled in the 19th century.

12 original pages mounted on 7 folios, 15.3 x 10.8 cm (3b), 23.2 x 17 cm (2a), 18.3 x 10.4 cm (2b), 19.8 x 10.5 cm (3a–b), 19.5 x 9.2 cm (3b), 16.5 x 11.7 cm (3a), 11.7 x 11.5 cm (3b).

25 x 33 cm (7a); written in nasta‘liq, khwarad–nasta‘liq and shahzadian in black ink on various cream papers, lacquered or coated in two cases. Illumination in black ink, opaque vitreous pigments and gold leaf. Mounted on boards, 33.7 x 21 cm, decorated with gold and multi-coloured rules and varied outer borders with floral and animal motifs. Accession no. 486669.

Mir ‘Ali Haravi was one of the greatest and most prolific masters of 16th-century Iran.1 He grew up in Herat and lived there until the city was captured by the Uzbek under ‘Ubayd Khan Uzbek in 1523. ‘Ubayd took Mir ‘Ali back with him to Bukhara when he was forced to evacuate Herat. Although Mir ‘Ali was honoured and well-treated by the Uzbek, he longed to return to his native town. However, it was in Bukhara that he died in about 1545, and it is there that he was buried. He copied many short poems, or ghazals, some of which are of his own composition, as well as numerous manuscripts. His work was greatly admired and collected by the Mughal Emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–27), who had numerous examples bound into albums, together with paintings and calligraphy by earlier and contemporary Persian and Mughal masters.2

Sayyid Mir ‘Imad al-Hasani was born in 1541 in Qazvin. He travelled to Mecca and Turkey before returning to Iran, where he spent some time in Herat and Qazvin before settling in Isfahan, where he was murdered in 1621. His work, too, was greatly admired and collected, both in Iran and by several Mughal rulers.3

Folio 1b contains a fine piece of work by Mir ‘Imad. The uppermost line, in large nasta‘liq, and the verses in the central panel, are fragments of love poems by unknown authors. On two sides, eight rectangles contain verses in an even smaller khwarad–nasta‘liq. The calligrapher’s signature appears in the lower left-hand triangle. The triangle in the upper left-hand corner is decorated with a delicate spiral scroll in gold and colours on a blue ground. The joins between the pieces of paper that make up this page are marked by gold illumination. Both the signature and the central part of the text have been coated with some compound. The outer border is of 19th-century origin.

The next folio, 2a, contains work by Mir ‘Ali. It consists of a ghazal on the approach of winter, one verse of which is repeated. The ghazal ends with the words ‘He who saw the writing of the humble Mir ‘Ali came to derive it with heart and soul’. Mir ‘Ali, who was a poet of some merit, may have added the last line to an existing poem. There are two signatures, one of which includes the word mashhāj ‘copied’ to indicate that the work is exploratory.

Folios 2b–c contain part of the text of the counsels and conversations of the 17th-century Sufi ‘Abdallah al-Ansari (1653–97) with Nizam al-Mulk, the vizier of the Safavid ruler Ali Arslan. These superbly rendered pages remind us that the content of many calligraphic compositions is often heavily Sufi in character, and that their content would have played a major part in the appreciation of the calligraphy for anyone educated in that area – whether scribe or connoisseur. This work is signed by Mir ‘Imad on folio 2a.

Two European engravings are also mounted in the album. One, of Admiral Lord Nelson (d. 1805), in hand-coloured (folio 6b); the other is uncoloured and depicts a young girl whose hair-style and costume may be dated to the first half of the 19th century (folio 3b). The engravings have been carefully integrated into the album pages by means of multiple borders with elaborate decoration, and rather coarse Qajar work with blue floral motifs on a pinkish-orange ground. They are a late example of a long tradition of including European drawings and engravings in Iranian, Mughal and, to a far lesser extent, Ottoman albums.4 The two final leaves are written in shahzadian. Folio 9b contains various counsels in ‘Abd al-Majid’s hand, written in Isfahan, ‘the Abode of Authority’ (dār al-adl), for Mullā Samī’ Mazandaranī. Folio 9a contains a ghazal on autumn by a state official (Mir ‘Imad al-Darāshī), ‘Abd al-Vahhāb. The poem is accompanied by a note that reads ‘Since His Auspicious Majesty ordered me to complete the ghazal on autumn on this piece and send it to him, I have done so, although it was written in haste on that August day. I have already made a fair copy on another piece and will present it to him. However, since His Majesty has desired possession of this piece, I thought necessary to copy some of the master’s writings on this piece, if it is to be included in the album of the exalted court’. The piece was written in the first part of Fath ‘Ali Shah’s reign (1797–1834), and must be the original draft of the ghazal ‘written in haste’.5

The poet, whose poetical work de fume was Nezābī, status that the piece was copied in the Record Office of Tehran. No date is given, but it must have been written before 1829, when ‘Abd al-Vahhāb died. A poet and scholar of some distinction, he was also accomplished in several arts, including that of calligraphy. Born in Isfahan of an old Shahrizau family, ‘Abd al-Vahhāb was called to Tehran by Fath ‘Ali Shah and became a court minister, being given charge of the Foreign Ministry in 1820 and of the royal library.

The borders are 19th-century work in three different styles: that of Rizā-yi ‘Abbāsi (folios 2b–3a); an 18th-century manner (folios 3b–4a); and fine Qajar work (folios 4b–5a). The margins of the final spread (folios 6b–9a) are pinkish-red and decorated with gold scrollwork. Folio 9a, apparently a single original with a coating of lacquer, bears the small seal impression of a former owner, Muhīd Khān, visitor of Nūr-Allāh Akbar from 1736 to 1746.6

5. Bayani (1341–48, ii, p.213) mentions another piece written by ‘Abd al-Majid for the same patron and dated 1829 (1240/983–99). For work by him in the Khalili Collection, see cat. 81, above.
7. See p.240, below. The same seal appears on nos 358, 257, in the Khalili Collection, with a note identifying it as the seal of Mahdi Khān.
۱۳. دناوی ۱۱-۱۲
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Album of prayers signed
by Mahmud ibn Visal

Iran, dated 1265 AH (AD 1849–50)

12 original folios mounted on
12 album folios, 12.2 x 8.5 cm,
concertina-bound, 4 lines to the page,
written in nasta’liq in black ink on
cream paper sprinkled with gold.
Illumination in opaque watercolour,
ink and gold pigment. Mounted on
boards, 23 x 15.5 cm, lined on the
verso with European watermarked
paper, and decorated with gold, black
and coloured rules. Binding of dark
red leather with a gold-tooled v-band;
doubleutz of blue paper.
Accession no. 340/1356

This album is the work of Mahmud
ibn Visal, one of the most famous
nasta’liq calligraphers of 19th-century
Iran. Mahmud was the second son of
Muhammad Shafi’ Shirazi, the out-
standing calligrapher of Shiraz, whose
tabahillas or nasta’liq style was Visal.
Mahmud studied calligraphy under
his father, but was also interested in
medicine and was a doctor as well as a
calligrapher. He became a muhadd, or
follower, of the Sufi Rahman-‘Ali Khan
and, eventually, his son-in-law. He
copied many Sufi texts and works of
poetry and his copy of the Dīwan of
Hafiz was lithographed in Bombay in
1835. Many examples of the work of
this prolific scribe survive, despite
the fact that he died of cholera in 1857
at the relatively young age of forty.
The album is signed on folio 13a,
where the scribe gives his own sobriqu,
Hāfiz, A. Qawwāl in the Khalili
Collection. has a marginal commentary
copied by the same calligrapher and
dated 1856.1

1. Q79(44), see Bayezid & Cottardini,
forthcoming.

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Group of seven
Separate calligraphers
Ottoman Turkey, 3rd
quarter of 17th century
8 original folios, (i) 9 x
(10) 9 x 15.5 cm, (ii)
(10) 9 x 15.4 cm, (iv)
(10) x 15 cm, (v)
(10) 8.9 x 16.2 cm;
line to the page, wa-
našī‘ī in black ink on
cream papers, laid and with
opaque watercolour pigment.
Mounted on
dry gilding on a blue
background, a narrow
border of floral sprigs.
Accession no. 340/547

Published Genera 1950

This group of compositions
the work of a
Ottoman calligrapher
working from the 17th century. Each
work is signed and dated and
the signature and date are
Hafiz. An. A stylus
the main transmitter of
time, while the other
students or major per-
formers. We can be cer-
tain that these were originally hand
manuscripts, but there are no
other than at least two di-
qualities in the present
album, or albums, with
the pages not being
on the sheet before
the present collection.
Mahmud called himself
in 1879. At one stage
probably framed and
played on a wall.
The eight albums
remains...
Group of mounted muraqqāt at pages

Ottoman Turkey, probably assembled in the early 15th century with late 15th- to late 16th-century material

1 original, (i) 9.2 x 24.8 cm, (ii) 11.5 x 16.5 cm, (iii) 8.9 x 15.4 cm, (iv) 9.5 x 16.4 cm, (v) 11.9 x 8 cm, (vi) 11 x 18 cm, (vii) 7.5 x 15.2 cm, (viii) 9.5 x 16.2 cm, variable number of lines to the page, written in silver and naskh in black ink on white and cream papers, laid and wove. Illuminations in opaque watercolours, ink and gold pigment. Mounted on paper and board, 45.8 x 53.3 cm, decorated with gold patterns on a blue ground, embossed gold bands, a narrow turquoise band with a gold interlace chain and an outer border of floral sprays and ribbons.

Accession no. 000732
Published Geneva 1999, cat. 160

This group of compositions documents the work of some of the greatest Ottoman calligraphers in the period stretching from the late 15th to the late 16th centuries. Each of the masters represented played a seminal role in the history of Ottoman calligraphy. Seyh Hamdullah (i, ii) is considered the founder of the Ottoman calligraphic tradition; Hafsa Osman (iii, iv, v, vi) was the main transmitter of Hamdullah’s practice; while the others were all important teachers or major practitioners. We cannot be certain if all the pages were originally bound in separate manuscripts, but they appear to come from at least two different albums. It is difficult to pinpoint when the original album, or albums, were assembled, but the pages cannot have been mounted on this sheet before the active years of the most recent of the masters represented, Mahmud Celaluddin, who died in 1529. At one stage the sheet was probably framed under glass and displayed on a wall.

The eight album pages were trimmed and, in some cases, cut up. They were then pasted on to separate sheets of paper before being glued to a single sheet of board. Other pieces of paper were used to fill in the gaps and these were covered with illumination, which also extends to parts of the originals. The names around the pages were covered with embossed or stamped paper. The text area was then surrounded by two borders, also pasted onto the card.

(i, ii) Seyh Hamdullah (1476–1523), Istanbul, dated early 15th/1510-1515, 21–20 August 1496

Seyh Hamdullah was the son of Seyyid Mustafa-dede, of the Suhrawardi Sufi order, who emigrated from Bukhara to Amasya in Anatolia. Hamdullah was often known as al-shaykh, the son of the shaykh, and regularly signed his work thus. He was a student of Hayreddin Marâji, the pupil of Abdallah Sayraf, the great Tâbâni calligrapher, who was said to have been a pupil of Yaqût al-Mustasimi. Hamdullah’s excellence in the art of calligraphy brought him to the attention of the governor of Amasya, Prince Bayezid, later Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512), who took calligraphy lessons from him.2 After Bayezid’s accession Hamdullah moved to Istanbul, where he lived at first with his cousin in Sarayburnu. He was apparently given quarters in the royal palace, but retired to live outside Istanbul on Bayezid’s death and the accession of his son, Selim I (r. 1512–1520), with whom he fell out of favour.3

Perhaps Hamdullah’s most enduring contribution to the development of Ottoman calligraphy was his reformulation and standardization of the writing of naskh, the most important of the script hands.

This item presents two separate examples of Hamdullah’s work. The first (i) contains an inscription in silver naskh above another written diagonally in naskh.4 The naskh reads ‘The superiority of the Seyh over his peers was made possible by the high-minded zeal of the Sultan.’ The naskh states ‘O You, who have given merit in fair and just reward! look how, in what manner, has written the scribe of the sultan, Sultan Bayezid Khan son of Sultan Muhammad Khan, May God may his reign as long as the angelic bodies revolve and as long as fish swim.’

Underneath this, a second example of Hamdullah’s work (iv) consists of a large rectangular panel of naskh, which begins: ‘God has given munificence to him who looks at the writings of his predecessors and has acknowledged the shortcomings of his successors. There are two towns beyond ‘Ubaydah.’ This is followed by the same text as the naskh on the first sheet. In addition, Hamdullah provides a description in a rhetorical, though no doubt accurate, image of himself, [writing] at the start of his old age, with a trembling hand, allama with white hair’. The text closes with the colophon, written in rhymed prose, giving the place and date of completion as Amasya, dated the first ten days of Dhu’l-Hijjah 901 (21–20 August 1496).

These pieces are of considerable documentary interest for their date, their association with Bayezid II, and the vivid, if brief, physical description of Seyh Hamdullah. Visually, the most interesting is that written in diagonal format. Its repetition of letter shapes, the lengthening of certain letters at crucial points in the composition, and the position of those strokes in relation to other letters on the line, all suggest a visual parallel with written hunting scenes, where a person is shown in a person and counterpart of music.

(ii, iii) Hafsa Osman (1461–98)

Hafsa Osman was born in Istanbul, where his father was the nazarîn of a mosque.5 His Arabic title, hafsa al-qa’ā’im, means ‘one who has memorized the text of the Qur’an and can recite it by heart’.

Hafsa Osman was highly regarded for his mastery of the thulth and naskh scripts. He was initially the student of Derviş Ali (d. 1673), the greatest calligrapher of the time in his old age, Derviş Ali allowed Hafsa Osman to study with Seyyid-i Vide Alparslan Efendi (d. 1686). Hafsa Osman obtained his qa’â’â in 1659, when he was seventeen years old. He was also a student of Nefes-i zade İsmail Efendi, with whom he studied the works of Seyh Hamdullah. Nefes-i zade (d. 1679) could write in a hand which was said to be indistinguishable from that of Hamdullah, and his guidance had two important consequences. First, Hafsa Osman was able to study, assimilate, and eventually incorporate into his own style that of Hamdullah. The examples of work by both calligraphers on this sheet enable us to see how closely their hands resemble one another. Second, his association with Nefes-i zade brought him into close contact with Sufi thought. Osman eventually became affiliated to the Suhrawardi Sufi, influencing his initiation into the order in the zerqâr, or dervish lodge, of Seyh Seyed Alâeddin Efendi.

Hafsa Osman became tutor in calligraphy to two sultans, Mustafa II (r. 1695–1703) and Ahmed III (r. 1703–1730). An extensive hagiography has grown up around him. How much of this is based on fact is difficult to say, but ‘Hafsa the Sufi’ was an extremely subject of much admiration, and earned him the title of ‘the second shaykh’, Seyh Hamdullah being the first.

Here, the first album page by Osman (ii) contains a line of thulth over five of naskh. The thulth sentence is incomplete and reads ‘He who...’. Muzaffer said: ‘It is incumbent upon the young...’ The naskh reads, according to ‘Skikârîth-ı Wallî, the Prophet of God, May God bless him and grant him salvation, said: “Neither the jâwâb nor the jârî will enter the Garden of Paradise.” He said: “The jâwâb is a person who has gathered wealth but has prevented others from doing so. The jârî is in the grave, the poor.” May God bless the Prophet of kindness, the patron of the Community, Muhammad and his good and chaste relatives.” This is followed by Hafsa Osman’s signature.

The second page (iv) is also written in naskh and thulth. Again, the saying in thulth is incomplete and reads...

sipers, but when they become full, the spirit becomes substance’. The word ‘substance’ is written in smaller letters at the end of the line. The four lines of naskh read: “The Prophet of God, May God bless him and grant him salvation, said: “If a man promised his brother something, and his sincere intention was to fulfil it, but for some reason, he could not meet that promise, then there is no misdoing on his part.” Also the Prophet, May God bless him and grant him salvation, said: ‘The best among you are those who defend their tribe by avoiding misdeeds...” Truly spoke the Prophet’, followed by the calligrapher’s signature. The colophon line is written on a separate piece of paper, but both the text and the size are identical to those of the main text as is the width of the panel.

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It is interesting to note that the hāshī in the two main columns of the text on this page is handwritten in a small pen, whereas the remainder of the text is written with a larger pen. The hāshī are given added decorative flourishes in the middle of the line, and the lines are separated by extra length of the line. The same technique is repeated in every column. The text is arranged in two rows, alternating lines of one word with lines of two. The line of hāshī in the upper right-hand corner is delicately drawn flanking the line of text, while the text is arranged by Rosette decorative frame. The same row is repeated in the lower right-hand corner, indicating that it was once part of the same page.

(5) Imam Yusuf (d. 632 AH), the son of Hafiz Osman, was a popular dervish in the Ottoman Empire. He was known for his knowledge of Islamic law and his ability to reconcile different schools of thought. He was also known for his piety and his devotion to the Prophet Muhammad. His works included commentaries on the Quran and the Hadith, as well as works on Sufism and Islamic mysticism.

(6) The name of the work is written in the center of the page. It is titled "The Book of the Prophet's Life," and it is written in the style of the Ottoman Empire. The work is dedicated to the memory of the Prophet Muhammad and his life.

(7) Among the works of Yusuf is the "Book of the Prophet's Life," which was dedicated to the memory of the Prophet Muhammad. The work is written in the style of the Ottoman Empire and deals with the life of the Prophet and his followers.

(8) Yusuf's works are still studied and revered today, and his influence can be seen in the works of many other scholars and writers. His works on Sufism and Islamic mysticism have been translated into many languages and remain popular around the world.
It is interesting to compare the thuluth in the two examples. In the first the vocalization is written with a very small pen, whereas in the second it is given added decorative and dynamic function by increasing the size and length of the two fatatsh vowels in the middle of the word. Hafiz Osman uses the same technique as Seyh Hamdullah in creating ligatures linking the final letters of one word to the beginning of the following word.

The line of thuluth in (a) bears some delicately drawn floral decoration, while the sentences in naskh are separated by rosettes drawn in the same style. The same rosettes also appear in (b), indicating that these two pages were once part of one album.

(a) Imam Yusuf (d. 1759)

Imam Yusuf or Hafiz Yusuf, as he calls himself here, was a contemporary of Hafiz Osman. A native of Istanbul, he was the imam of a mosque in the Mollağa district. He was also the father of Mehmed Raim (d. 1753), the calligrapher of section vi on this sheet and teacher of Müstakim-zade, the Ottoman scholar and connoisseur of calligraphy. The latter describes Yusuf as a humble, abstemious sort of man, but very studious, with a remarkable range of knowledge, coupled with the ability and generosity to communicate that knowledge. He had many students and represents one of the most important links in the chain of calligraphic transmission. His first teacher was Suyolu-zade Mustafa Efendi, the teacher of Hafiz Osman. Suyolu-zade, Mustafa examined his work but did not give him permission to use the word kattah (written by) before his name. After death of his teacher, Yusuf continued his studies under Mehmed Efendi, who granted him his status. Among Yusuf's own pupils were his three sons, Mehmed Raim, Ibrahim Vask (d. 1754) and Süleyman Raci (d. 1753). All three were members of the Ottoman court. Yusuf's work is represented here by a line of thuluth above five lines of naskh. This confluence of letters improves both the visual 'harmony' of the line and the balance of the composition. The letter kaf in the centre of the word of the word mahfi' is seen here in the so-called 'cat's-face' form, which was usually found at the beginning of a word. Conversely, the same letter at the beginning of hajarah ('my love for you') is in the 'almond-shape' form normally used in the centre of a word.

(b) Mahfi' (d. 1753)

Mehmed Raim was born in Istanbul and became the pupil of his father. Imam Yusuf (see vi, above). With the latter's permission he went on to study under Seyyid Abdullah, Hafiz Osman's leading student, obtaining his ijazah at the age of eighteen. According to Müstakim-zade, it was difficult to distinguish the hand of Mehmed Raim from that of his teacher. To illustrate this the Ottoman author tells how Seyyid Abdullah was asked by an important official to write a copy of the Qur'an in ghifah. Abdullah himself was unable to write in this difficult script, of which he endeavoured to perfect the art of calligraphy; he had no spare time. Mehmed Raim was born in Istanbul and became the pupil of his father, Imam Yusuf (see vi, above).

(1) By Müstakim-zade, it was difficult to distinguish the hand of Mehmed Raim from that of his teacher. To illustrate this the Ottoman author tells how Seyyid Abdullah was asked by an important official to write a copy of the Qur'an in ghifah. Abdullah himself was unable to write in this difficult script, of which he endeavoured to perfect the art of calligraphy.; he had no spare time. Mehmed Raim was born in Istanbul and became the pupil of his father, Imam Yusuf (see vi, above).
Mahmud al-Andalusi (fl. 13th century) is known for his calligraphic works which have been highly acclaimed. He was a prolific writer and an influential figure in the Islamic world. His works have been widely copied and admired, including his calligraphy on the pages of the Quran.

Mahmud al-Andalusi's calligraphy is characterized by its elegance and precision. His style is a blend of the earlier classical scripts (kufic, thuluth) and the more modern scripts (naskh, thuluth). His calligraphy is often referred to as 'andalusi' or 'andalusiyya', reflecting his influence and style.

The text on the page is composed in naskh script, a cursive style used in Arabic calligraphy. The script is characterized by its flowing, natural lines and the use of ligatures, which connect letters to create smooth transitions. The calligrapher's skill is evident in the careful attention to detail, with each character carefully formed and placed in relation to its neighbors.

The significance of naskh script is that it provides a visually pleasing and aesthetically pleasing medium for writing Arabic text. It is widely used in Arabic literature, and the calligrapher's mastery of the script is a testament to his artistic and technical abilities.

In conclusion, Mahmud al-Andalusi's calligraphy on the page is a beautiful example of the art form and a testament to the skill and dedication of the calligrapher. The use of naskh script in this work highlights the artist's ability to create a visually appealing and meaningful representation of the text.
"Mahmud al Amili" (Muhammad al-muwaddi), though this epitaph may have contained a touch of irony: he is reported to have said that he never bowed his head to anyone, and seems to have made a number of enemies. He was also reportedly a man of some physical power, which probably helped him in his work writing large-format jali thuluth and muhaqqaq.

Cataluddin’s work is represented on this page by a line of thuluth and four lines of naskh. The thuluth inscription reads: “The thankful one who has been fed is like the one who is patiently fasting.” The naskh reads: “The Prophet, May God bless him and grant him salvation, said: “If you enter other people’s homes you must first greet them, and when you leave, bid them farewell.” According to Abu’s-Abbas, the Prophet, May God bless him and grant him salvation, said: “On the Day of Judgment you will be called forth by your own names.” O God, bless Muhammad and all his family and grant them salvation” followed by the calligrapher’s signature. In Cataluddin’s thuluth the same centripetal principle that has been observed in the thuluth inscription of other masters is evident (see the above). There are two other compositional features of importance here, the rhythmic repetition of sub-linear curves and of verticals at regular intervals. None of the accompanying orthographic symbols has been unduly enlarged, as it was unnecessary to lend extra weight to any part of the design.

Clearly, the smallest difference in the width of the nib can make a marked difference in the appearance of a piece of naskh and alter the entire layout of the composition. Cataluddin’s writing is the smallest of all the examples on this sheet: his naskh must have been written with a fine-nibbed pen. For Haife Osman’s text (vi) the pen-nib was evidently trimmed to a slightly larger point. The distance between the lines of script in Cataluddin’s naskh is one centimeter. In Osman’s example, this distance is only three millimeters more, yet in writing the same sentence his line is one centimeter longer. In fact, this sentence, ‘The Prophet of God, May God bless him and grant him salvation, said: “...’ (qala rasul allah salla Llahu ‘alaihi wa sallem), occurs in all the examples, except those of

Hamudullah, and comparison between them is instructive. Although the elements are the same in all versions, the individuality of each hand is apparent: conformity and individuality can co-exist in harmony, an essential concept in Arabic calligraphy.

There is no original illumination apart from a simple gold rosette marking the end of each sentence in the panel of naskh.

(vii) Anonymous calligrapher

The page in the upper right-hand corner of the sheet gives neither the name of the calligrapher nor a date. The page may well be later than the others on the sheet, and perhaps was chosen merely to fill space when the other pages were being mounted. The thuluth inscription reads: “Know that this day of yours is a day of feast,” truly spoke (the Prophet).” The first three words are impressively written, with the nun of arza (‘hurut’) flowing into the mina of yammmam (‘your day’). The alif at the end of la’la (‘this’) forms the central pivot of the inscription, but the words after it may be considered too weak to provide an adequate visual balance to those on the right. Although the text has been cropped, the calligrapher appears to have had to include the word ‘adage (‘truly spoke’) to lend weight to the second half of the line, even though the word is meaningless without the rest of the sentence. The composition illustrates a fundamental difficulty with calligraphy of this traditionally balanced type, yet it contains a great variety of letter shapes that would have required considerable expertise to execute.

There are a number of weak points in the naskh, regardless of its overall appeal. In the last line, for example, there is an awkward space between the alif, the dhat and the rest of the word. There is no illumination, apart from simple rosettes placed arbitrarily at the end of the first three lines of naskh.

2. The date of Hamudullah’s birth is uncertain: Mistaqam-zade 1928, pp. 157-77 gives it as 1244/1829; 13/1456-77.
5. Mistaqam-zade 1918, pp. 186, 187. See also Hitti & Tanudi 1995 and the entry on the issue of Hamudullah’s attitude towards Selim.
6. After it was glued down, the lower part of this page was illuminated, transforming the original rectangle into a 7-shape.
7. Hamudullah has repeated the second sentence, with a slight variation, in the margin. Serin (1995, p. 179) publishes another example of such repetition by Hamudullah.
9. There is a Qur’an copied by Dervis Ali in the Khalili Collection, Q00490. Geneva 1995, cat. 27.
10. Ibid., no date, p. 134.
11. Haife Osman uses the term ‘parsayada’, for which see the essay on the kawadana, p. 13), above.
12. Two should not be confused with Yusef al-Hafiz, who died in 1786 and studied under Mehmed Rashin, among others. See Mistaqam-zade 1928, p. 596.
14. The last two lines are on a separate piece of paper, but all came from the same page.
15. The Arabic text has "he was born" for "you were born".

16. This double use of a letter shape became fairly common among Ottoman calligraphers in the 18th and 19th centuries. The technique was used occasionally by Iranian masters, but almost never in the Arabic-speaking world prior to the Ottoman conquest.

17. Mistaqam-zade 1928, pp. 466, 467.
19. Ibid., no date, p. 134.
21. See also cat. 75.
22. See also cat. 90.
35 Album of hadiths attributed to Şeyh Hamdullah
Ottoman Turkey, 16th century

36 Album of maraqqa‘āt
signed by Şeyh Hamdullah
Ottoman Turkey, early 16th century

1. An album by Şeyh Hamdullah containing the six hands is in Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, inv.no. 981, fol. 12r-29v. See Serje 1980, p. 87, pls. 229-234. For a discussion of the six scripts, see Taşkın 1974-78, v. IV, pp. 85-105. See also fol. 23r for another example of the zubdūt composition on fol. 64.

2. See fol. 23r for another example of the zubdūt composition on fol. 64.
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
8 original folios mounted on 1 album folio, 8.7 x 12.8 cm (average area within wider gold border); 3-3 lines to the page, written in shubh and snaikā in black ink on cream-coloured laid paper. Illumination in opaque and translucent watercolour, ink and gold pigment. Mounted on card, 12 x 28 cm, bound at the edges by leather strips and decorated with a gold band, red and gold rules, strips of marbled paper and panels of cream or blue paper with gold sprinkling. Binding of dark red leather with gilt-stamped central medallions and corner-pieces, double-breasted of dark brown leather with a central medallion in gold and red with a gold leaf motif.

This manuscript contains a collection of hadiths and aphorisms in shubh and snaikā. The layout is traditional, consisting of a large of shubh and three of snaikā written in a horizontal format, apart from folios 23 and 24, which has four lines of snaikā, and folios 32-33, with two lines of snaikā. However, the shubh and snaikā panels have all been cut out of their original sheets and are pasted down separately. With the exception of the text on the openings spread (folios 3b–4a), each line of shubh has been carefully cut out close to the letters and pasted down on a grey ground. The lines of shubh are decorated with gold floral sprays, and the sentences in the panels of snaikā are separated by gold reserves.

The shubh inscription forms a continuous text, consisting of a question put to the Sasanian monarch Kusa Anushirvan and his reply. The text in the panels of snaikā consists of sayings of the Prophet and his Companions.

The colophon appears in the left-hand side panel on folio 33. It is written in riqā', a note in Ottoman 'Turkish' on folio 34, evidently appended by an admirer, reinforces the identification of the scribe, stating 'Hafiz Osman, at the height of his career'.

The calligraphy is of the highest quality, the shubh in particular being faultlessly controlled throughout. The rules for shubh were well established by Hafiz Osman's time. He conforms to them, yet at the same time, transcends them. On folio 40 for example, the shubh inscription reads: "mīrām khān qābādšāh min al-mawālik yā yā (‘of the kings who came before you and...’). The composition pivots on qadhā' al-tanān, and each word applies its location and enhances the impact of the entire line. The letter nān occurs six times and forms the head and tail of the composition, and the first word in each half of the composition contains a finely tapered letter nān. To create the final combination of letters, the calligrapher had first to pull the pen downward to form the tā, or hāj "hook", on the line, then bring the pen down in a broad sweep, turn the nib 90 degrees and continue upwards to complete the final stroke. This is what calligraphers call 'sliding over the surface', for which concentration and a steady hand must be combined with a relaxed posture.
59
Album of hadiths, signed by Mustafa al-Amidi
Aleppo, Ottoman province, dated Ramadan 1175
(February–March 1666)
20 folios, within inner border 9 1/2–13 1/2 cm (height range), 18 1/2–22 cm
(width range); 14 or 15 lines to the page, with 6 on the colophon page, written
in bakhsh and nasab in black ink on
cream laid paper. Mounted on board,
18 1/2 x 14 1/2 cm, decorated with gold
rules; various tinted, silver-spinkled
papers and borders of marbled paper.
The binding is modern.
Acc. no. 1012:17
This album contains a number of
hadiths written by Mustafa al-Amidi.
1 The text is competently executed in
what we must presume were the prevailing styles of bakhsh and nasab in the
Arab provinces of the Ottoman
Empire, for the colophon states that
the writing was completed in ‘Aleppo
the Grey’, Syria. 2 Despite its provenance
it is presented in standard
Ottoman format, demonstrating the
reach of the style favoured in Istanbul.
The album may have been compiled
in its present form in the 19th century,
when it was cut up and pasted down, though the borders of marbled
paper are 18th-century. 3 Each panel of
text is framed by gold rules followed
by a band made up of strips of tinted
paper pasted down to create diagonal
stripes. This is followed by coloured
bands sprinkled with silver, which
have been set into borders of bright
marbled paper. The panels on each
side are also of tinted or marbled
paper. This reliance on tinted papers
to create decorative bands is a little
different from mainstream Ottoman
albums.

1. From the old city of Amid (modern
Diyarbakir) in Eastern Turkey.
2. Many Arab cities had epithets
attached to them. In some cases these
were descriptive like ‘Aleppo the Grey,
Mosul the Hilly (al-badha’); in others
merely honourific, as in Cairo the
Victorious (al-mu’azzam).
3. Folios 8 and 9 have been bound in
the wrong order.
Album, signed by Seyyid el-Hac Hasan Rza after Şeyh Handullah

Ottoman Turkey, dated 1309 (AD 1893–94)

8 original pages mounted on 5 album folios, 11.5 x 8.8 cm (text area), 6.9 or 7 lines to the page, written in rubarb, naskh and muhaqqaq in black ink on polished, cream paper, laid with 10 lines to the centimeter. Illumination in gold, orange and blue pigments. Mounted on boards, 31 x 26.7 cm, covered in glossy oil-based blue laid paper and decorated with gold rules and a gold-stamped border strip. Binding of maroon leather with gold rules and strips of glossy oil-based blue laid paper.

Acc. no. 25264
Published: Geneva 1995, cat. 165

This is the work of Hasan Rza (1849–1923) who became well known for the plates he produced for a lithographed edition of the Qur’an published in 1874, which was widely distributed and has been repeatedly reprinted because of its clarity.

He was born in Üsküdar but the family came from ‘Omoovo in the province of Bulgaria, where his father was made porter master. After his father’s death in 1864 Hasan was cared for by his brother, who was an officer in the household of Sultan Abdüllaham’s mother. With her help he travelled in the Sultan’s brass band. He took lessons in calligraphy from Mehmed Şefik, the band’s tutor, and from several other calligraphers, the most influential of whom was Yahya Fillimi (d. 1907). Later, thanks to Mehmed Şefik, he also received tuition from the famous Mustafa Izrak. He was appointed imam to the band and following Mehmed Şefik’s death succeeded him as tutor in calligraphy. When the Medresat Haseim (School of Calligraphy) was established in Istanbul he joined its staff as a teacher of rubarb, naskh and naskhī.

Hasan produced a large volume of work, including manuscripts, fols. inscriptions for members of the royal household and inscriptions for religious and secular buildings. Several of these are listed by Mahamad Inal. One of his most famous commissions was to complete the copying of a Qur’an begun by Mehmed Şefik and left unfinished at his death.

This album contains a number of sayings attributed to the Sufi master Ḥusayn bin Muḥammad, known as Ṣafafir. It is beautifully written, simply presented, and was copied from an earlier example by Şeyh Handullah. Each page bears a line of rubarb and several lines of naskh. On each alternate folio the naskh is written diagonally. The text is undecorated apart from rosettes between the sentences.

2. See Dorman 1995, p. 115, pl. 139.
3. Of other examples of this text in the Khadi Collection, one is attributed to Yaqut al-Mustasimi (cat. 10) and one to Hatfa Osman (cat. 18).
The Qit'ah

The most popular form of secular calligraphic composition throughout the Islamic world has always been the qit'ah. This Arabic word, derived from the root q-t-h' meaning 'to cut, disjoin, separate', denotes a fragment of poetry or prose, usually in two or four lines. The qit'ah was the most popular calligraphic format in both Iran and India as the enormous number of examples executed by Iranian and Indian calligraphers — such as cat.61, by Mir 'Ali — demonstrate.

The Iranian qit'ah always follows the same principles of format: it comprises several lines of Persian poetry, normally four but sometimes six, written in nasta'liq. The lines are placed diagonally within a vertical composition, with each pair of lines offset from the next. Within the lines the ligatures of certain letters — i'in, shin, taw and ba' — are exaggerated in length, or, in the case of a final ya', bent back under the body of the text. This results in a long extension stroke occurring about the middle of each line, though there may be more than one in a line. The disposition of the lines within the text area creates triangular spaces in the top right- and lower left-hand corners. The lower triangle normally contains the calligrapher's signature, while the upper space is filled with a short phrase, such as 'He is the Victor' (bara'a al-mu'izz) or 'He is the Merciful' (bara'a al-rahim), as seen on cat.61.

Although Ottoman calligraphers often wrote Persian and Ottoman Turkish poetry in this diagonal format, the equivalent Turkish word, keta, referred to a page composed horizontally, with one line of large script at the top and several lines of a smaller script arranged beneath. Instead of creating two triangular spaces, this arrangement leaves two blank side panels, as in cat.67. It was theoretically possible to use any of the six classic hands in such an exercise, but in normal practice only thuluth and naskh were employed. Moreover, this format was used exclusively for writing Arabic text.

The Ottoman keta format was, however, more flexible than its Iranian counterpart. A second line of large script was frequently added at the bottom; the smaller lines could be written diagonally; and the signature could appear in any one of several places, including the side panels. It is not clear when or why this format was first developed: it was certainly in use by the 16th century, as one of its greatest exponents was Şeyh Hamdullah (c. 1520), and it is possible that it originated from the last panel of an album of mufaddat or muraqqasa, where the calligrapher would append his signature. Whatever its origin, the Ottoman keta continued to be used from the 16th to the 20th century.

The horizontal qit'ah format was not confined to the Ottoman Empire, as is shown by examples from Iran and India in the Khalili Collection, such as cat.65, 66, 72 and 73.
Islamic world meaning 'to cut, comprises several lines. The
line may be more
comprised of
"He is the
in cat.62.
Turkish poetry in
script arranged
blank side
contemporary
Moreover, this
counterpart. A
other lines could be
including
it was certainly
Nur al-Din Muhammad ibn
mufradat or
22 and 73.
The Qīʿāb

61 Qīʿāb signed by Mir ‘Ali Possibly Bukhara, dated 1328 (AD 1536–7)

20.3 x 7.7 cm (within inner rules); 7 lines to the page, written in nastaʿlīq in black ink on cream paper. Illumination in black ink, gold and coloured pigments. Mounted on card, 30.1 x 19.8 cm, decorated with floral borders on two sides of pale pink paper, margins of pale blue-tinted, laid paper and gold and red rules. Accession no. CA.144

If the reading of the date under the signature is correct, this qīʿāb must have been copied during Mir ‘Ali Haravi’s enforced stay in Bukhara, where he was taken by the Uzbeks in 1528. He died there in 1541-42.

The verses relate the consequences of the birth of a fortunate child. The piece has been decorated in a late 16th- or 17th-century Iranian or Mughal style. On the verso, the seal impression of a later owner, Fathallah, is dated 1732-33.

1. For other work by Mir ‘Ali Haravi, see cat. 53.

62 Qīʿāb signed by ‘Imād al-Hasani

Iran, circa 1600–15

19.8 x 10.5 cm (within inner rules); 6 lines to the page, written in nastaʿlīq in gold outline in black on cream, laid paper. Illumination in black ink, opaque watercolour and gold. Mounted on board, 27.5 x 18 cm (horizontal), decorated with dark blue painted and gold border and green margins with gold and coloured rules, heavily sprinkled with gold. Accession no. CA.1175

This untitled composition is the work of ‘Imād al-Hasani, who was murdered in 1545, supposedly after offending Shah ‘Abbās (r. 1587–1629).

The verses read:

Because of the limitless sins which I have committed,
I have made bashfulness my intercessor.
Every error in speech has impelled me to take agony pen.
This has befallen me many times.
In the triangle at top right is the phrase ‘He is the Merciful’ (bura al-rahūm), and at the bottom, the colophon. Part of this inscription, which may have contained a date, has fallen away.

The most striking visual features of the composition are the sweeping horizontal strokes in the centres of each line. The first two and the last are formed by the letters ʾalif and ʾain, in their nastaʿlīq variants. The third has been made by adding an artificial extension between the letters faʾ and faʿ in the word wafrū (“speech”).

The verses were presumably deemed worthy of illumination because they had been copied by Mir ‘Imād. The sheet has been divided into two diagonal panels around the verses, and partially decorated with naturally drawn foliage in gold against a blue ground.

Another qīʿāb in the Khāṭṭī Collection, signed by Mir ‘Imād (cat. 144, 46-catalogue), is similar in composition though it lacks the finely illuminated ground.

1. Mūsštakīm-zāde 1918, p. 696; Qazi Ahmad–Minorsky 1959, pp. 167–8; Bayat: 1547–81, ii, p. 578–78, no. 706. See also cat. 45.

63 Page signed by Shah-Mahmud Nishapuri

Iran, 16th century

17.7 x 9.7 cm (within inner gold rules); 9 lines to the page, written in nastaʿlīq in black ink on paper marbled in grey, beige and cream. Mounted on card, 27.9 x 16.9 cm, decorated with a blue border and green margins with gold and coloured rules, heavily sprinkled with gold. Accession no. CA.177

This is the work of Shah-Mahmud Nishapuri, one of the most esteemed masters of nastaʿlīq. Born in Nishapur, he worked for Shah Tahmasp in Tabriz and finally retired to Mashhad, where he spent many years until his death in 1554-55. He was buried there beside Sultan ‘Ali Mashhad, the city’s most famous calligrapher. The historian of calligraphy Qazi Ahmad took lessons from him whilst a young man, and wrote an extensive biography of him in his Gulistan-i Naran.

Shah-Mahmud worked on two of the best known manuscripts of his time: the Khamsah for Shah Tahmasp, now in London, and part of the Hafiz Navrang which was made for Sultan Ibrahim Mirza, and is now in Washington, DC. But he is perhaps most famous for having used nastaʿlīq to write a copy of the Qur’an and to produce other Qur’anic extracts, several of which found their way to the Ottoman court, where his work was admired.

Three verses praise the ‘Shah of Khorasan’, that is, the eighth Shah ‘Abbās I, Rūhs, who is buried in Mashhad, and they were probably copied in that city in Shah Mahmud’s later years. They are signed in a triangle at the bottom left, but are not dated.

2. British Library, ms. Or.1216; Freer Gallery of Art, ms.46.12.
3. The Qur’an is now in the Topkapi Palace Library, ms. mh.1–4. See also cat. 46, above.

64 Qīʿāb signed by Mahmud ibn Ishaq Shihabi

Iran, 16th century

14.1 x 7.6 cm (within inner rules); 7 lines to the page, written in nastaʿlīq in black ink on foliocular, dark cream paper. Illumination in black ink, gold and coloured pigments. Mounted on card, 27.5 x 16.9 cm, decorated with a grey-brown border and blue margins with gold and coloured rules, heavily sprinkled with gold. Accession no. CA.78

The calligrapher of this qīʿāb, Mahmud ibn Ishaq Shihabi, came from a village near Herat. Like his famous contemporary, Mir ‘Ali Haravi, he was taken to Bukhara after the capture of Herat by the Uzbek ruler of Bukhara in 1528. There he became the pupil of Mir ‘Ali, whose work he is said, by some, to have surpassed. He left Bukhara to live in Balkh, but died in Herat in 1573.

The four lines of romantic poetry seen here are typical of mid-16th-century qīʿābs produced for inclusion in albums. Indeed, the panel is mounted on the same dark blue card as cat. 65 above, and apart from the small difference in the height of this mount, the similarity of the two items makes it probable that both items came from the same album.

3. Another page in the Collection, 45505, which bears a 16th or 17th-century Ottoman painting of a young dervish, is mounted in a very similar manner and may also have appeared in this album. See Geneva 1991, cat. 14.
Shihabi came from the distant city of Bukhara. Like his famous predecessor Ali the Great, he was renowned for his knowledge of the Qur'an and his mastery of the Islamic law (iṣnaḍ). Shihabi's work was published in a richly illuminated manuscript, featuring the muḥārām script, which was highly desired among scholars and collectors.

The manuscript, written in black ink on paper, is adorned with gold and blue calligraphic flourishes. A small inscription, possibly Shihabi's name or a dedication, is visible in the lower right corner. The page is bordered with intricate floral designs and geometric patterns, characteristic of the Islamic art of the region.

The page is part of a larger collection of manuscripts and artifacts displayed in a museum, indicating its importance and the significance of the work it contains. The presentation highlights the cultural and historical value of the manuscript, reflecting the rich heritage of Islamic script and calligraphy.
Several fragments, mounted as one, 8.3 x 19.6 cm (within inner rules); 3 lines to the page, plus a colophon, in 2 diagonal lines, written in black ink and naskh in brown-black ink on dark cream, floccular paper, probably laid. Illumination in black ink, opaque watercolour and gold. Mounted on card, 20.2 x 29.7 cm, within borders of brown, yellow and blue paper.

Accession no. C.1281

The calligrapher of this piece, who describes himself in the colophon, writes in naskh, as having 'arranged (nasmaghaba) the text, is otherwise unknown.

The text is a verse of Arabic poetry, written first in naskh and then repeated in naskh:

*Birds are reminded by their barbarity,
And the mighty lions is monstrous
tube it appears.*

This is followed by another verse in naskh:

*And the remains of a dwelling devid of all the testimonies of Man,
Its soil is nothing but venom and dross.*

The very best traces of an owner’s seal.

1. For a detailed analysis of this album, and information on ‘Ala’-al-Din Tabrizi’s career, see cat. 43.

11.1 x 17 cm (within borders); 6 lines to the page, written in jali thuluth, naskh and nasta’liq in black ink on cream, slightly floccular paper with no visible details. Illumination in black ink and two tones of gold pigment. Mounted on board, 16.5 x 23.3 cm, backed with marbled paper and decorated with pink, gold and blue framing bands of textured paper.

Accession no. C.1223

Mustafa Kütahi, 18th century

Mustafa Kütahi was a contemporary of Muradlix-zade, who mentions him briefly. He was a native of Kütahya, known as shaykh-zade and a pupil of Audili – presumably Dârailim Rodof. He became the ico-in-law of the Imam of the Fatma Sultan Mosque in Kütahya.

As this piece shows, his work was characterized by simplicity of design and mastery of execution. In the line of naskh the letter kaf is repeated four times and the combination of letters is balanced by the exaggerated fathah vowel and the miniaturizing of the final words in the naskh. Each of you is a shepherd and responsible for his flock. The letter ‘ayn impales the naskh below, thereby integrating the two passages. The naskh is also a jahadh, concerning ‘wolves in sheep’s clothing’, so that the two pieces are united both thematically and physically.

The two side panels contain gold blossoms and floral scrolls, the right-hand panel mirroring that on the left.

1. Müstakil-zade 1928, p. 154; Rado, no date, p. 186.

30.3 x 56.2 cm (within outer gold rules); 6 lines to the page, written in jali thuluth, naskh and nasta’liq in black ink on cream, covered paper, stained brown. Illumination in black ink and opaque watercolour. Mounted on board, 41.7 x 47.4 cm, decorated with marbled side panels with a tulip motif and gold-studded framing bands.

Accession no. C.162

This is a copy of a precisely work produced by Hayfi Osman in AH 1105 (AD 1693–4), five years before his death. In his early work the copyist, Mahmud Celalridian (c. 1819), signed himself ‘Mahmut the Zanezbe’ (Mhmed-elm-vengeid); an unlikely sobriquet in view of the fact that he was released an apprenticeship because of his pound, quick-tempered nature. Mahmud was largely self-taught, taking as one of his models the work of Hayfi Osman.

The page is divided into three panels: the first and last are written in naskh thuluth, the middle one in naskh and nasta’liq. The first contains the haizmah, preceded by the reference to Solomon’s letter to Eloqui, Queen of Sheba, from the sura al-Naml (xxvi, verse 352): ‘It is from Solomon, and is (as follows): ’In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.’”

Osman used this verse when devising his diagrammatic presentation of the Hilyah. The text in the final panel reads, “I swear by the sun, by the cloudless sky and by her light.” Osman’s colophon is placed in the centre, followed by that of Mahmud Celalridian. Rectangular panels of marbled paper (ibna) flank the centralpanel. Some craftsmen were so adept at this difficult decorative technique that they could incorporate figurative shapes, such as flowers – in this case, tulips – and even animals, into the marbling pattern.

1. See above, pp. 46 and 118.
2. See above, pp. 47 and 49.
Arabic script and calligraphy, 18th century

The Arabic text is likely a verse from the Qur'an, given the style and context. The script is elegant and ornate, typical of Islamic calligraphy from the 18th century. The document may be a selection of verses, possibly from Surah Al-Ikhlas (The Purity), which is known for its simplicity and purity in the Islamic tradition.

The script is written in black ink on a yellowish parchment, with gold accents and intricate designs. The layout is traditional, with the text arranged in a single column, following the right-to-left script direction of Arabic.

This type of calligraphy is used in religious texts and may be found in mosques, academic contexts, or as decorative elements in Islamic art.
ﷺ
Several sheets, mounted as one, 17.4 x 21 cm (within inner rules); 7 lines to the page, written in black ink on brown paper. Illumination in opaque watercolour, ink and gold pigment. Mounted on card, 10.8 x 17.8 cm, decorated with borders of gold-speckled, marbled paper and gold and black rules. The format of this page is typical of an Ottoman album page. The text of the 'צהיב' inscription contains a degree of verbal repetition: 'They have reviled a roar like our roar; they have clamoured a clamouring; and the enemies have cried out.' The original designer of the inscription cleverly reflected this 'tongue-twister' element in the composition by employing three groups of letter forms, the letter 'ו' being predominant. The composition is the work of an outstanding master and was copied several times, Mustafa Izet's version being only one of many. One of the earliest known examples is by Mustafa Balkh (1717–1826), the most original composer of calligraphic inscriptions after Ahmed Karadhan, and very probably the deviser of this piece. Underneath the 'צהיב' inscription there are further inscriptions (The Messenger of God ... said, 'Do not curse Fate, for God is Fate; ... Do not curse All, because he was woken in the essence of God; ... Do not curse the sovereign - yet ask God to protect you from his evil.') The contract between the two sets of inscriptions may seem strange, but such juxtapositions are common in albums of calligraphy. The colophon reads like that of cat. 65, 'The servant of the People of the Clock, Seyyid Izet Mustafa, in the year 1874.'

2. Rado, no date, p. 241, reproduces an example of this composition by Mustafa Harun dated 1945, under which the calligrapher has written that he copied it from one by Mustafa Balkh.
o kitas by an
ligrapher
9th century

inner rule
160.95 x 118.3 cm
in the page, written
in and pale yellow-
notation in black
slices and gold,
2.1 x 3.5 cm,
letters in two tones
and gold, and
an elongated
maroon
gold-sprinkled
persian and
pockets of marbled

9

nudaths, each
are album folio.
join with a line of
m 'Ali, upon
/Vs approval. This
nudath set
which read: 'A man
becomes munim-
munif when trans-
manifests; avoid him!
confused you:
way of God.' This is
nudath by Anees
9 begins with a
advices. 'Keep to
commanding well
The panel beneath
which written
also another 'badath
-loba, may God be
Prophet of God,
and grant him
freedom is appar-
the limits
tremely. Thereby.
And one's
ized; no one may
not have a centrifugal
surrounded
with an enlarged
first line on folio
space is the lower
in the child on
phrase has inserted
the word 'uza
between the letters

91, folo 38
The Qit'ah

Qit'ah signed by 'Abdallah
Possibly Hyderabad,
dated AH 1000 (AD 1591–2)

16.5 x 16.7 cm (within inner rules);
10 lines to the page, including 4 lines
written diagonally, written in black, naskh and rijal in black ink on cream
paper, probably laid. Illumination
in black ink and gold pigment, with
sparsely gold sprinkled. Mounted on
card, 22.7 x 32 cm, decorated with a
gold leaf border and framing bunch
of dark blue and red glossy paper.
Accession no. CAL.860

Both this page and cat. 72 which
follows are from an album of calligraphy
compiled for the Qub Shahi
rules of Golconda and Hyderabad,
Muhammad-Quli Qutb Shah,
(r. 1572–1612) in the millennial year
AH 999–1000 (AD 1591–92). Most
of the album is in the Solar Jang Museum,
Hyderabad, but portions of it are to
be found in other collections outside
India.1

The album consists of works by
Deccani calligraphers and famous
Iranian scriptors as well as some Iranian
calligraphers who had emigrated to
the Qub Shahi court, of whom this
'Abdallah may be one. There are other
elements of calligraphy by him, signed
Haji 'Abdallah, in the album.2

The shadbūt text reads: ‘Dim-sighted,
in showery weather, I walked roughly;
my only companions were vassalage,
hangar-pangs, thirst, indignity and
morn.’

This is followed by a passage in
naskh: ‘They asked a jester, “Do you
count the lunacies around you?” He
answered, “That will take too long; I
only count the wise.”’

This is, in turn, followed by a
passage in shadbūt: “One night they said,
“Our dogs are growling.” We replied,
“Is there a wolf prowling around?”’

The final line, in naskh, reads, “They
asked a man, “Why do you not
sweat?” He answered, “I hate to die
lying on my bed.”’ The last word
has been damaged and is unclear. The
colophon is written at the lower right.


This page is from the same source
as cat. 72, the ‘Millennium’ album of
Muhammad-Quli Qutb Shah. The text
in shadbūt is a verse of Arabic poetry:
We are virtuous, we do not alarm
our ally, and we restrain ourselves
from greed.
The square in the middle contains
an explanation by Al-Jama‘i, the
great philologist and grammarian
of Basra during the Abbasid period. He
reported hearing an old man of the
Bani Kazana tribe say that Hasan
ibn Thabit, one of the favourite poets
of the Prophet, used to refer to this
verse as the jawayarda, ‘the appropri-
ate little verse’.

470
Kalp, levhas and
the art of composition

The peoples of the Islamic world have always reproduced examples of calligraphy, in
various media, on the walls of their dwellings and public buildings, for both decorative and
devotional purposes. Producing a calligraphic original, to the highest standard, was an
extremely time-consuming and expensive process. To provide a quicker means of repro-
ducing the technique of kalp-making was developed and was used to greatest effect in the
Ottoman Empire during the 19th century.

The Turkish word kalp is from the Arabic qālīb or qālah, meaning a mould or matrix.
The kalp was copied from a calligraphic original, often written specifically for the purpose
using a special yellow, arsenic-based ink, żurnak nierekkebe,
 on brown or black paper – the
letters were retouched or corrected with black ink. Making the kalp involved two stages.
In the first, the original was placed over one or more sheets of paper and the outline of the
calligraphy pierced with dots or perforation marks, using a needle or sharp-pointed tool, at
intervals of a millimetre. The process demanded skill and care, and would be performed – or at
least supervised – by the calligrapher.

The kalp was the secondary perforated sheet which could then be used to reproduce the
outline of the calligraphic original upon a third sheet. Such a method enabled multiple pro-
duction, as one could make ten kalps sheets as easily as one, and each of these could give rise
to another ten, and so on. The kalp was thus a tool – a means of reproduction – and not an
end-product. However, a calligraphic original might also be perforated and used directly as
a kalp, like cat.97, though it would have become spoilt in the process.

The second stage involved tapping powder through the holes in the kalp onto a sheet of
paper below, in order to transfer the outline of the design. The kalp was positioned on a
blank sheet of paper, on a table or other support, and a piece of felt impregnated with either
chalk (for use on coloured paper) or charcoal (for white paper) was placed over the kalp.
By shaking or tapping the support, particles of chalk or charcoal would be transferred
through the pricked holes onto the blank sheet.

Transforming the outline of dots left on the sheet of paper below the kalp into a finished
piece of calligraphy was no mere matter of routine, but demanded a skilled calligraphic
hand. To make the reproduction, the calligrapher would usually work with ink or gold.
Sometimes mother-of-pearl, ivory, tortoise-shell or bone were used, cut first into fine
sheets and then into the desired shape before being glued on to a base.

A number of kalp sheets survive and have become collector’s items. Original compo-
sitions which have been perforated in the course of producing a kalp, like cat.97, are o-
ccasionally included in muraqqa’ at albums. The Khalili Collection also contains a calligraphic
roundel dated 1515–16, by Şeyh Aziz Rüfî (cat.195), which was probably intended to be
used for the production of a kalp, though it remained unperforated. Obviously, the best
kalp reproductions were those made by the master who wrote the original composition.

The process described above was not the only way of reproducing a composition.
Another was by means of metal or cardboard stencils. It must be said that some calli-
graphers opposed the use of kalps, or any mechanical means of reproduction, fearing that
their work would be copied without their consent, and kalps were often hidden to prevent
their unauthorized use.

The product of the two-stage process was the levha. In everyday use, the word levha simply
means a framed inscription or picture. Kalps were usually employed for the production of
levhas in large scripts such as jālī thulth. As techniques of paper manufacture improved, larger
and larger sheets of paper became available and calligraphers were eager to exploit the new
artistic possibilities this created. Consequently, even larger scripts – particularly jālī thulth and
jāt ta’lliq, and to a lesser extent jāt muhaqqaq – were used. In order to mount these large

1. Crushed arsenic re-
quired in the making of
levhas; see cat. 30.
2. For an example of
levhas from the Jezur
Yezidi for one using
3. Examples include
the Waterperry Collect-
ion of a book. See
4. In Turkish levha is
Arabic laḥab mafīs
sented in the Qur’an’s
33, verse 83. For
the description of
calligraphy, in which decorative and architectural features were combined with brushstrokes, was an art that had to be preserved in its own right. Black ink, which was used for the purpose of calligraphy, was created by mixing henna with gum arabic and had to be made by the artist himself. The process was divided into two stages. First, the ink was made by mixing black paper—the material used for calligraphy—with gum arabic. Next, the ink was poured into a vessel and allowed to dry. Once the ink had dried, it was ready to be used.

To reproduce the composition on a wall, the artist would first transfer the design to a piece of paper. This was done by applying the ink directly to the paper, and then transferring the design to the wall using a technique called "burnishing." The ink was then smudged using a tool, such as a brush or even a stone, to create a shadow effect. The final stage of the process was to paint the design on the wall using black paint, which was applied in layers to create a rich, deep black color.

Many, but not all, leaves were produced from kalips. One can identify a kalip from its perforation marks, but to determine whether a particular leaf has been produced by a kalip is more difficult, as two examples in the Khalili Collection by Mustafa Izzet demonstrate (see cat. 78 and 79). Two general points may be made. Firstly, most of the leaves written in jali-thulth were produced by kalips. After the pouncing process was complete, an experienced master calligrapher would use a reed pen with a broad nib, the width of which matched the thickness desired for the strokes of the characters, and write the characters in one operation, using the perforation marks as a guide—rather than pencilling in the outline from the perforation marks, and then filling in the interior of the characters. Secondly, leaves filled in with gold rather than with ink would normally have been made using a kalip. Such work was usually done by a skilled illuminator familiar with the technique of working in gold (Turkish sarne alun, Persian zar-andis). Calligraphers, however, are often to blame for the production of leaves—often by means of kalips—because of the large scale of these leaves. The production of leaves—often by means of kalips—was one of the major contributions made by the Ottoman Turks to the tradition of calligraphy, and many of their leaves represent an innovative approach to large-scale calligraphic composition.

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1. Crushed arsenic mixed with vinegar or gum arabic; see cat. 97 and 109.
2. For an example using black paper, see cat. 80 by Izzet and cat. 78 by Izzet for one using white paper.
3. Examples include two metal stencils in the Khalili Collection, see cat. 196 in the form of a bird; see cat. 197 presents an inscription written in thuluth naskh or naskh script in the shape of a horse.
4. In Turkish lebha malfize and in Arabic lebha malifiz, the term is derived from the Arabic word lebha used in the Qur'an to refer to the preservation of the word of God (xxvii, verse 81). For lebha malifiz, see al-Ghazali—Sufi by 1991, pp. 97, 141, 444.
Eight *budshah* copied by Mahmud Celâlîddîn after Hafız Osman after Seyh Handullah

**Ottoman Turkey, c. 1700–1710.**

This composition, signed by Mahmud Celâlîddîn, was commissioned by the Prophet to Abu Bakr as he hid from their pursuers in a cave near Mecca: "Do not fear, do not be sad: God is with us." This was said during the course of the Prophet’s flight from Mecca to Medina on 18 June 622, the event which marks the beginning of the Islamic era.

The first part of the text ("Do not fear") is miniaturized and placed in the top right-hand corner so that the calligrapher has fewer words to work into the impressive main composition. Its effectiveness is enhanced by the extreme contrast between the black script and the white decorative elements placed on the ground, which has also allowed the calligrapher to sharpen the definition of the letters. It is probable that Celâlîddîn was the originator of the composition, though the use of the word *surah* in the colophon, written in *taqquf*, does not rule out his having copied it from someone else.

Although the central panel is written on a separate sheet of paper it would appear that its borders and the margins were executed at the same time.

This composition is signed at the bottom left by "the son of Yeṣârì: Yeṣarî-zade Mustafa İzetz (1770–1849) was the son of Mahmud Esâd Yeṣari, and is known as 'the son of Yeṣarî' (Yeṣarî-zade) to differentiate him from Kasâver Mustafa İzetz (1801–76), his pupil.

If he was indeed its designer, Yeṣarî-zade may have derived this composition while still under the influence of his father, who was one of the great 18th-century masters of Ottoman *taqquf*.

1. Radio, no date, p. 181; see also cat. 46, above, and 72–86, below.

2. For another reproduction from the same *kâlip*, see Derman 1990.
Lehe by Mustafa Izzet
Ottoman Turkey, dated 1273 (1856-57)

63 x 57 cm (overall); written in jali shubh painted in gold pigment on cream card coated ultramarine. Illumination in 3 tones of gold and opaque white pigment, with a plain inner border and vegetal corner-pieces attached by sprays of roses to double-palette motifs and a border of pendant trefoils and palmettes. Accession no. CAI.440

Mustafa Izzet (1815-76), usually known as Kazasker Mustafa Izzet, or Seyyid Izzet Mustafa, was one of the leading Ottoman masters of the 19th century. Apart from being a superb calligrapher, he was a musician and poet with strong Sufi and alchemical interests. Mustafa Izzet was responsible for what are, perhaps, the best known examples of Islamic monumental calligraphy: the huge roundels on the interior walls of Ayasofya, which bear the names of the Prophet, of the Four Orthodox Caliphs and of God. This composition consists of a saying in two parts: 'I have five names, by whose colour I can quench the heat of anguish: al-mustafa (Muhammad); al-murtadha (Abu Bakr), their two sons (Hasan and Husayn) and Fatimah.' An unusual feature of the inscription is in its inscriptions of gold circles for diacritical points instead of the more normal rhomboids.

1. See above, cat. 69.
2. For related roundels in the Khalili Collection, see below, cat. 81-82. See also Geneva 1995, cat. 1 and 2.
3. On the words al-mustafa and al-mustafa.

Lehe by Mustafa Izzet
Ottoman Turkey, one dated 1279 (1864-65)

24.1 x 17.6 cm (within ruled area); 2 lines, written in jali shubh in gold pigment on cream card coated black. Illumination in gold. Mounted on board, 33 x 83.5 cm, decorated with gold rules and a floral spray. Accession no. CAI.416

The text is from the surah al-Madid (101, verse 5): 'He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Immanent: And He has full knowledge of all things.'

The execution of cat. 79 is slightly inferior to that of cat. 78 and it may therefore be considered a copy, reproduced using a kulp, from the original; the quality of the pigment is poor and it has not been applied to the paper surface effectively. Cat. 78 also bears a date which is absent from cat. 79, and it is likely that the kulp-maker simply omitted the date, or that the date medallion was added freehand to the original. The copy has an elaborate floral border which was added after the execution of the script.
35 cm (diameter); written in jahl thulth and šufa in gold pigment on card, coated ultramarine. Mounted on board, 43.8 x 37.5 cm, coated ultramarine. Accession no. CAL.461

The roundel contains the name of Husayn and the words 'May God be pleased with him'. It must have been one of a set of eight to be displayed in a mosque, together with the names of God, Muhammad, the four Orthodox Caliphs and that of Hasan, brother of Husayn. There is one partial set in the Khalili Collection, cat. 82–7, with as of the eight names.

65 cm diameter; written in thulth, carved in wood in chamfered and gilded, on a dark blue ground painted over a thin layer of gesso. Accession nos. MGD.265 A & MGD.265 B

Published Genera 1995, cat. 7

The roundels, part of a set of four in the Collection, bear the names of God and of Abu Bakr.
Tughrā of Sultan Mahmud II, from a design by Mustafa Rakım
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

41 x 47 cm (within inner rule); written in jālī thulūd painted in gold on cream card; decorated with a border of linked floral sprays and corner medallions in two tones of gold and silver.

Accesion no. CAL.334
Published Geneva 1993, cat.174

Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808–39) was probably the most accomplished of all the Ottoman monarchs who tried their hands at calligraphy. His work is of excellent quality and will stand comparison with that of any of his calligrapher contemporaries. He studied first under Mehmed Vusfi (d. 1813), then with Mustafa Rakım (d. 1816), one of the greatest Ottoman exponents of calligraphic composition.

The teghāl of Mahmud II as designed by Mustafa Rakım, follows the traditional format of Ottoman teghāls but adds the epigraph ‘‘Allāh, ‘The Just’’ in an elaborately decorated cartouche on the right. In full, the teghāl reads ‘Mahmud son of Abūl-Hamīd Han, always victorious. The Just (Mahmud ibn ‘Abd al-Hamīd ibn al-Muta‘affar al-‘āsma‘n ‘Askalān)’. The letters are outlined in black ink and certain details have been added in black to indicate where some strokes impale others.

1. Ihsan 1970, pp. 191–8; Rado, no date, pp. 204, 205; Derman 1976; Derman 1982. Numerous examples of Mahmud’s work exist in the Topkapı Palace Library, Istanbul.
2. For work by Vasfi, see above, cat. 8.

Levha by Sultan Mahmud II
after Mustafa Rakım
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

31.3 x 38.2 cm (within inner rule); written in jālī thulūd painted in gold on cream card, coated ultramarine, 32.5 x 53.2 cm, decorated with gold rules and a border of sun leaves with intervening flower design. The corners have gold squares with white rosettes.

Accesion no. CAL.122
Published Geneva 1993, cat.173

This composition, consisting of four lines of text in jālī thulūd, is a religious poem in praise of the Prophet written in Ottoman Turkish. The sultan’s signature is written inside a pinnacled cartouche flanked by leaves. The form of the colophon is said to have been designed by Mustafa Rakım. Another example of the main composition, signed ‘Rakım’ and dated AH 1226 (AD 1811), exists. The sultan’s version must be a copy, one of many such made of his teacher’s work by Mahmud.

There are two separate lines of jālī thulūd. The first is a hadīth of the Prophet (‘My intercession will be for those of my community who committed great sins.’) In the second line the writer begs for the intercession of the Prophet. In the first line the fulcrum of the composition consists of three vertical strokes; in the second, each half of the composition is balanced by vertical strokes at the two extremities. In both lines, the calligrapher uses a distinct ligature to join the letter ‘ṣiya’ to a preceding ‘alif’ which, strictly speaking, should remain unattached. This is called the ‘minai-like’ ‘ṣiya’ (al-ṣiya al-ṣamīn), a calligraphic device that was gradually passing out of use.
a hadiths,
Abdulmejid
4th century

in inner role);

dark cream
Illumination in
watercolours and
scroll with large
blue ground.

995, cat. 177

and Sultan
was an
ruler. He was
Shah, the leading

by Sultan
consists of two
written in

Man and taught
the second in
(u'sa 'alim); "They
have been elabo-
أو رأست مجهوت هب حصن الطين
بناه فهنلا كيما أفا المقالفين
روض الله ذي الأوراد لحبل
هذا جنات لأخو خالد
Lebha by Sultan Abdülmeclid
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

24.4 x 79.5 cm (within inner gold rule);
written in Jali script painted in gold on
laid cream paper, 40 x 90.5 cm, coated
deep brick-red, pasted on thick board
and decorated with gold rules and a
two-tone gold and black floral border.
The paper was at some time damaged
by being folded in half vertically.
Accession no. GAI.441

The text of this composition is from
the surah Fatiha, verse 44: ‘But
God is the best to take care of him;
and He is the Most Merciful of those
who show mercy!’ The composition
also bears the sultan’s colophon.

Lebha by Sultan Abdülaziz
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

18.5 x 45.6 cm (within inner gold rule);
written in Jali script painted in gold on
card, 32 x 60.5 cm, coated black and
decorated with a scroll of bouquets of
grapes and ribbons with corner
reserves in two tones of gold and silver.
Accession no. GAI.443

The reign of Sultan Abdülaziz (1861–76) was a turbulent one, with
revolts and insurrections in the Balkan provinces bringing about the inter-
vention of the Great Powers. Major civil and judicial reforms within the
Empire, the so-called Tanzimat, could not disguise the fact that the state was
in terminal decline. At the age of 46, Abdülaziz was overthrown and
shortly afterwards committed suicide.

Abdülaziz is not remembered for
the quality of his calligraphy, and this
composition was certainly not his
own. It is a fine, bold example of the
Arabic aphorism ‘God will help you in
all matters.’ The prominent central
loop is made up of the root ‘Ji’d.’

The sultan’s colophon in the lower
left-hand corner is enclosed in a laurel wreath tied with silver thread. The
illumination—vines leaves, grapes and
tendrils interlaced with ribbons—is
an excellent example of good-quality
Ottoman calligraphic decoration using
a limited range of colours.
Inscription for the renovation of a minbar ordered by Sultan Abdülmecid
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

Three strips mounted as one, 20.5 x 135 cm (overall), written in gold chadhıḥ in black ink outlined with gold pigment on pale cream, polished laid paper, backed with green silk.

Acc. no. 295.200

Published Geneva 1995, cat. 3

This long inscription commemorates the renovation of a minbar which was undertaken at the expense of Sultan Abdülmecid. It reads: "This shining minbar was renewed for the face of God the Generous, the All-Knowing, the Generous, by the Sultan of the two sacred cities, by the Sultan of the two seas, the one who is honoured to be the servant of the two sacred cities, Mecca and Medina, the conquering sultan Abdülmecid, 8th of the conquering sultans. In view of the inscription’s emphasis on the sultan’s position as guardian of the Holy Places, the minbar in question may have been either in Mecca or in Medina.

The calligraphy is a beautiful example of split chadhıḥ, a technique whereby the inscription is split into rows, one above the other, throughout its length.

1. "The two shores" are Europe and Asia; "the two seas" the Mediterranean and Black Seas."
This is an unusual octavo in a small format, with compositions in red. The lines have been altered, but have been added as if there were calligraphy. The zard muqaddam, or ink support, is on black. The three outer black pages are from paper.

The verses, written in Persian, were composed of the lockless Sufis and describe his attributes. The bright sky as paper of the night for a public
Kulp, with verses in praise of Sultan Abdülaziz
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

Levha by Mehmed Şevki
Ottoman Turkey, dated AH 1322 (AD 1895-6)

Levha by Seyyid Yusuf ibn Takiaddin
Ottoman Turkey, dated AH 1320 (AD 1893-4)

Levha signed by Fethi-zade
Ottoman, 19th century

4 folios, concertina-bound; 11 lines to the page, 26.2 x 12.7 cm (within borders); written in ta'liq in yellow, arsenic-based ink on sized black laid paper. Mounted on board, 31.7 x 48 cm, decorated with borders of mottled paper.

Acc. no. CAL.464

"This is an unusual example of a Kulp in a small format, whereas most were for compositions in sahn al-thulth or ta'liq.

The lines have been pieced to form a Kulp, but have been mounted for an album as if they were a finished piece of calligraphy. The text is written in zahr al-sharkbi, the arsenic-based ink cement, with corrections in black. In three out of four cases the black page is formed from two pieces of paper.

The verses, written in Ottoman Turkish, were composed in honour of the Vali Sultan Abdülaziz: "To describe his attributes one needs the bright sky as paper and the blackness of the night for a pen.""

1. See above, p. 142.

The composition is the work of Mehmed Şevki and is considered to be one of the finest examples of sahn al-thulth.

It invokes the name of the 'Abd al-Qadir al-Gaylani (1077-1166), founder of the Kadiyasi Sufi order: "O Presence, Sultan, Shaykh, Seyyid, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Gaylani." The composition begins at the lower right and continues upwards in overlapping lines, the letters forming a pyramid. The term 'Abd al-Qadir" is written in an elaborate loop to balance the composition.

For a fine example of Şevki's naqsh, see above, cat. 12.

28.1 x 22.8 cm (inside inner rule); written in sahn al-thulth, shubha and naqsh in gold pigment on cream laid paper, 31.3 x 21.4 cm, coated black, decorated with rules and floral sprays in gold, and blue pigment on the medallion. Accession no. CAL.255

Published: Gerosa 1995, cat. 185

The Qudat al-Burda, a poem composed by the 13th-century poet, al-Buni, was probably the most popular ode ever written in praise of the Prophet. These lines from the poem read, "Does ardent love assume that love exists only in blazing fervour and contented harmony?"

They have been deployed in a sahn al-thulth composition in which the words of the verse flow over and into each other. The last few words have been rendered in a smaller size.

In his colophon, contained within a small pointed cartouche at the lower left, Seyyid Yusuf ibn Takiaddin states that he was the servant of the Minister of War (javansher), Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha, and a pupil of Mustafa Şefik.
Leke by Sami
Ottoman Turkey, dated 1380 (AD 1735–4)
32.6 x 66.5 cm (within inner gold rule); written in jali ta'līf and ta'lūf in gold pigment on card, 41.5 x 73.7 cm, coated black and decorated with gold rules, knots and floral corner-pieces in three tones of gold. Accession no. CAG.246
This composition is the work of Seyyid Mehmed Sami (1288–1312), also known as Yorgani-zade but more commonly simply as Sami. He was a leading master of ta'līf, but also produced work in chuhrā. These lines are from surah al-Mumin (2), part of verse 44: “My [own] affair I commit to God: for God [ever] watches over His servants.” The composition is dominated by two sweeping strokes in the centre of each line, the upper one being a letter ʿāʾ, the lower a ligature between the letters ʾayn and ʿayn. Sami’s colophon appears under the lower stroke.
The border employed is one of the most successful applications of decorative frames to calligraphic works of this type, and the overall finish is extremely smooth, with no signs of pre-imary outlining of the characters.

Leke by Hoca-zade Hulusi
Ottoman Turkey, dated 1383 (AD 1738–9)
17.3 x 69 cm (within inner gold rule); written in jali ta'līf and ta'līf in gold pigment on black paper, 33.4 x 89.2 cm, mounted on card and decorated with gold rules. Accession no. CAG.225
Mehmed Hulusi (1269–1352), who signed himself both Hoca-zade and Hulusi, was taught ta'līf by Sami, and the naskh and chuhrā hands by Muhasin-zade. Hulusi, who was only 17 when he composed this inscription, went on to rival Sami’s reputation, and was considered the greatest master of ta'līf in his day. Ironically, he reached the peak of his career after the Arabic script had been abolished in the newly-established Republic of Turkey.
The text is from surah al-Naziḥah (109, part of verse 2): “Take warning, then, O ye with eyes to see! Such a composition illustrates the striking difference between the way Ottoman and Iranian calligraphers used ta'līf. The Ottomans employed a level baseline and allowed relatively large breaks in the text for dramatic effect, as in the phrase ‘posseors of [8 ... 8].’ Iranian nasal/ta'li parts were always written on a sloping baseline with the first letter of a word usually beginning above the final letters of the preceding one. The colophon is written at the bottom, with the diarrheal points of the long vowel ‘ā’ dividing the sentence into two parts.
1. See the compositions by Sami, cat.111, and Muhasin, cat.108. For Hulusi’s work in ghulār, see cat.150.
This composition is an amplification of the chahâlah, "There is no god but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God." Here it reads, "There is no god but God, the King, the Evident Truth. Muhammad is the Messenger of God, the truthful, the faithful promise." The composition has been designed in the form of an oval, with vocal points and additional orthography arranged to reinforce this shape. The eye is drawn to the name of Muhammad in the centre. Directly above it is the word 'God' and directly below, 'the promise' (al-wahid). The piece has been signed underneath the last word and dated at the bottom center.

The words are entirely surrounded by an elaborate decoration of floral sprays and scrolls, which may be the work of Hakkî, one of the greatest illuminators of the late 15th century. A sharp tool has been drawn over the gold to add linear details.

in inner gold rule; 
and "rajul" in gold
black brown, wave
on. 43 x 38 cm,
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formerly Trebizond.
Lehba by an anonymous calligrapher
Ottoman Turkey, 17th century

Size: 11 x 22.6 cm, with a black and gold, painted decorative frame.

Published: Geneva, 2005

'Interwoven' paper, especially popular in the 19th century, featured the following example of an interwoven piece; a signed piece read: 'In the name of the Guardian'. He is the one who is more kind. The way is the way of trust in the following guardian. He is the one who is more kind. The way is the way of trust in the following guardian.'
Lebha by an anonymous calligrapher

Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

110
Lebha signed by Arif
Ottoman Turkey, dated AH 1309 (AD 1491-2)

39.4 x 55.7 cm (within inner rule); written in jali thuluth in black ink on beige paper. Mounted on board, 55.3 x 79.5 cm, with green and gold sprinkling, decorated with gold and black rules and an orange border, with margins in burgundy with green and gold sprinkling. Accession no. 26.425.

Like cat. 107, this piece is remarkable for its vigour and simple presentation. Inscriptions such as this illustrate how Ottoman calligraphers continued to produce work of outstanding quality even in the final decades of the Empire. The text is from surah al-Shu'ara' (xxvii, verses 88 and 89): 'The day when neither wealth nor sons will avail, but only he [will prosper] that brings to God a sound heart'. In the first line the designer of the inscription has made the letter ‘ayn the focal point, written as if it were an independent letter to increase its visual power in this central location. In the next line, in contrast, the letter combinations are on the right and left form independent compositions framing the name of God. That on the left, consisting of the words 'with a sound heart' (bi-qalb salih), makes a fine composition in its own right. Arif's colophon appears in the bottom centre.

1. For Arif, see İnal 1970, pp. 54-9.

2. 110
Lebha signed by Hakki Altunbezer
Republic of Turkey, dated AH 1356 (AD 1937-8)

21.7 x 47.5 cm (within inner rule); written in jali thuluth in black ink on three strips of cream paper mounted to one, 48 x 44.2 cm (overall), painted on board and decorated with gold and coloured rules with a floral chain border and an outer border of palmettes. Accession no. 26.430.

The career of Ismail Hakki Altunbezer (1879-1948) spanned the final years of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the modern Republic of Turkey. Ismail Hakki was one of the last naghib writers for the Ottoman sultan and various Sufi shaykhs, and accordingly was known as nabihbezer, the 'naghib writer'. He was also one of the masters who kept the art of calligraphy alive in a period when the Arabic script was suppressed.

The text here reads, 'I have put my trust in God.' The adj magnificat in the word 'god' (magnificat) has been combined with the letter kuf in the word tanzukkât (I have put my trust').

The diacritical points of the letter kuf in the last word are incorporated into the word 'God', and are written in circular instead of chabbaib form. The dynamism of the composition is enhanced by the elongated vowel signs arranged as parallel lines. The polychronic border is in a revivalist manner that recalls 13th- and 14th-century manuscript illumination. The panel itself was produced in 1945, almost 20 years after the Latin alphabet had been officially adopted for the writing of Turkish and, although the calligrapher used the traditional Arabic formulas of a 19th-century master, the composition may well be his own.

1. İnal 1970, pp. 98-102; Rado, no date, pp. 178, 179.
Lebha by Malik Muhammad
Iran, 15th century

Two sheets mounted as one, 17.3 x 26.4 cm (overall); written in nasta’liq and abqal in black ink on cream, varnished paper. Mounted on board, 19.3 x 28 cm, decorated with gold and blue rules and marginal decoration in black ink on cream varnished paper. Mounted on cream and orange-tinted laid paper, 27.8 x 21.8 cm, decorated with gold and coloured rules and gold sprinkling.

Accession no. C.A. 177

The panel is composed of two separate strips which were obviously taken from the same original. The lines of nasta’liq are decorated with linear scrolls and volutes that spread between the letters.

According to Pirma al-Sultani,1 Haj Malik Muhammad, advisor of Qasim, was one of the master calligraphers of nasta’liq and invented the decorative form of nasta’liq seen here. He may have used the tip of the pen to create the unusually fine circular letters.

The upper line reads, "T’u catapult the heavens rains bolts of wickedness." The lower line says, "The end of [being] a calligrapher is the beginning of beggary."

1. Pirma al-Sultani—Afshur 1562, pp. 174, 273; see also Bayazi 1345-47, 180, p. 350, n. 334. As least one other example of Malik Muhammad Qasim’s work, dated 131-1, has been published; see Munira 1364.

Lebha by Malik Muhammad
Iran, 16th century

15.2 x 23 cm (irregular original); written in Kufic in black ink on cream paper, cut out and pasted onto another sheet, both heavily varnished.

Accession no. C.A. 179

The text reads: "There is no God but God; all the letters are outlined with dots. Although the date in the colophon now reads 573, the first numeral appears to be a later addition, and the original date presumably read 571 for 481 x 450 (AD 1534-35)."

15. Two lebhas signed by Muhammad Husayn
Iran, dated 1226 (AD 1817-18)

Area within ruled lines 67.7 x 44.8 cm (C.A. 406), 66.5 x 43.4 cm (C.A. 406); 6 lines to the page in each, written in nasta’liq in black ink on varnished paper. Illumination in black ink and gold pigment.

Mounted on card, 77.5 x 51 cm (C.A. 406) and 77.5 x 52.2 cm, (C.A. 406), decorated with gold and multi-coloured rules and quatrefoils and a large scroll in gold.

Accession nos C.A. 405, C.A. 406

These compositions present lines taken from the Khamsa ("Five Tales") of Nizami. According to the colophon both were ordered by a certain Bahman Mirza from Muhammad Husayn, a very common name which makes the calligrapher difficult to identify. The lines presumably had some special significance for the recipient, and must have been framed with the intention of being displayed, as they are of exceptional size. They were written with a pen whose nib measured at least one centimetre in width, indicating that the diameter of the shaft must have been nearly two centimetres.
ed by

1377-8)

7.7 x 42.8 cm

43.4 cm (CAL.406);

each, written in

on varnished

black ink

7.7 x 11 cm

32.2 cm (CAL.406),

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Seven le'ivahs signed by Ghulam Riza
Iran, art 123 (AD 1750–71)

Seven sheets, ranging in size from 26.7 x 44 cm to 17.4 x 44.4 cm, written in jali nasta'liq in black ink on cream, laid paper pasted onto card. Illumination in opaque watercolours and gold with floral scrollwork and gold and carmine framing bands.

Acc. no. CA14/19-24, 242-6

These panels are the work of Mirza Ghulam Riza Isfahani, known as khodamiru ("the writer of large scripts"), a well-known calligrapher in 17th-century Iran, and were perhaps produced as patterns for tiles. According to the modern pencil inscription on the back of one of the boards, the seven compositions were to have been part of a set of 54 such panels written by the calligrapher. They contain lines of verse in praise of Dast-Khan Ma'ayir al-Mamalik ("Khan Master") that may be part of a longer poem.

Only a few of the lines can be easily understood, since they are taken out of context:
(cat.137) ... the praised Dast-Ali Khan, "Traverser of the King's Treasuries" ...
(cat.138) ... "kurnadah ([I]Ma'ayir, the world of splendour and brilliancy,..."
(cat.139) ... the king whose wrath is the fortune from the Suvn Allah ...
(cat.130) ... whose intellect would be defective, and whose thought distressed ...

There are two types of colophons, both written in small calligraphy outlined in gold; the first type is found on four items, cat.127, 128, 121 and 123. These are numbered on the back in ink with the Persian numerals 5, 14, 19 and 20 respectively and the colophons read al-faqit al-faqit Ghulam Rida ghaffar (date 1235) (AD 1779–81). The other three panels, cat.119, 122 and 123 are signed al-faqit Ghulam Rida and are not dated; they carry the numbers 31, 32 and 36 respectively. The phrase 'O Ali, Help!' (yaa 'Alla hidad) is written in a tiny hand in all three secondary cartouches, with the exception of cat.119 and 120. Not only are the panels well composed and written, using a pen with a sub-one centimetre wide, but the painted floral scrollwork has also been carefully executed to harmonize with the calligraphy.

The card onto which the pieces have been mounted has an embossed stamp in Russian, that reads Fabrika ..., no. 3.

1. For his biography, see cat.17 above, p.36.
2. The note on the back of cat.119 mentions that there are 54 of these panels with Aqa Mirza (?)? Mahmud.

Le'ivah signed by Muhammad Ali
Iran, AH 1305 (AD 1887–8)

39 x 28.1 cm (overall); written in rhudd in viscius black ink on beige card with plain bordered shiny black paper.

Acc. no. CA14/53

It is not clear when this composition was first devised but it was popular around the turn of the 20th century. It reads 'Everything perish: except His face.' The sentence is written so that some of the letter forms are used several times over, while others metamorphose into a different letter. For example, the sub-linear stroke of the letter lam is thin (every) is used for the sub-linear parts of both the 'wa' in wa'a (face) and the 'yai' in shy" (thing).
Levha

Probably Iran, 19th century

20 x 14.6 cm (original size)

Script in black ink on paper. Illumination.
Mounted on card, decorated with gold and framing bands.
Accession no. 64.14.47

There are several vertical, mihrab-shaped containers, each using different colors and patterns. The container is a masdak, al-Qalam (xviii), followed by the phrase "الله الصادق" and a sahm al-dakhil. A ketab must presumes for salmanic purposes; written here, they are frequently beginning of the text in Iran.

Lezha
Probably Iran, 19th century

20 x 14.6 cm (original); written in Kufic script in black ink on heavily varnished paper, illumination in gold pigment. Mounted on card, 23.5 x 17.5 cm, decorated with gold and coloured rules and framing bands of tinted paper.
Accession no. CAI.178

There are several examples of this mihrāb-shaped composition in existence, such using different Qur'ānic verses as prayers. The text here consists of a bismillah, part of the surah al-Qūran (17:111), verses 31 and 32, followed by the phrase, mat shat'a allah, and a lamā lādālah. Although the composition must presumably have been used for talismanic purposes, the Qur'ānic verses written here were not, although they are frequently placed at the beginning of the text in Qur'āns made in Iran.

Ghubār. Writing in miniature

The name of this form of script, from the Arabic word ghubār (‘dust’), implies that it is as delicate as particles of dust on a piece of paper. Indeed, words written in this script can be as fine as a single hair. Al-Qaṣṣābī described ghubār as being born from riqa’ and naskh scripts, with no talqī or šūdūr (serifs). The best way to analyse ghubār, however, is to study the construction of its ascenders and descenders, which are almost identical to those of thulṭūt.

The technique involves writing minuscule inscriptions that usually measure about 1.5 millimetres in height, and rarely exceed 3 millimetres. In the 19th century, however, ghubār was employed in conjunction with considerably larger scripts – in the work of the late 19th-century Ottoman calligrapher Mehmed Nuri Sivasî, for example, represented here by cat. 129 and 131, and might itself be comparable in size to naskh.

Ghubār was used initially for messages being sent by pigeon post, when it was necessary to compress information into the smallest possible space. However, the technique soon adopted by calligraphers eager to display their skill.

Apart from its postal function, ghubār was used by calligraphers in three ways: for the production of scrolls; for esoteric, talismanic and magical writings; and for copies of the Qur’ān. These separate functions, however, tended to coalesce. Scrolls written in the ghubār technique survive from the Mamluk and Ilkhānid periods, but examples must have been produced before the advent of those dynasties. They were often talismanic in character, containing Qur’ānic verses believed to give protection against misfortune, such as the ‘Throne Verse’ from the surah al-Baqarah (2:255). These verses, written in a large script, might be filled with the entire text of the Qur’ān written in ghubār or, alternatively, they might be reserved against a background of verses in ghubār. The production of talismanic scrolls like cat. 126 continued into the 19th century throughout the Islamic world.

In the case of scrolls used for magical purpose, reading may also have been very important. By reading out the inscriptions written in larger script one transmitted the power of the ‘hidden’ text in ghubār, either written within the larger letters or as the background defining them. An example in the Khalili Collection demonstrates the often dramatic nature of these magic scrolls (ms650, ex-catalogue). The slow unrolling of the scroll, with the appearance of strange shapes and sudden changes in script and format, would have created an atmosphere of mystery and perplexity.

The use of ghubār in copies of the Qur’ān was different again. Here, clarity was of paramount importance, and the script was written in its least ambiguous form, with ample spacing between words and verses. Whenever it was employed to write verses from the Qur’ān, ghubār script had, like any other, to be clear and legible for, even if it was never to be read, to have distorted the sacred text would have been a serious matter.
or copies of the scroll, written in the same style. Examples must have been very important, as the calligraphy was often dramatic and the scroll, with its own device, would have been very impressive. Clarity was of the utmost importance, with ample space between verses from the text so that it was never to

The script can be as varied as 'ruq'a and naskh in the east, or thuluth in the west. However, ghubar was the calligraphic form of the late medieval period, and the one represented here by the manuscript was written in a large, almost formal style.

Scroll

Iran, 18th–19th century

5 sheets pasted together to form a scroll, 6.5 x 141.5 cm. Written in thuluth and ghubar in black and red ink on polished, cream wave paper. Accession no. CAL5

The thuluth script and its vocalization are formed from lines of ghubar, the thuluth written in black and the vowel signs written in red. The scroll bears a well-known prayer, 'Call upon Ali, the revealer of wondrous things; you will find him a help to you in all calamities. Every sorrow and every grief will vanish, according to your prophecy, O Muhammad! By your sovereignty, O Ali! O Ali! O Ali!'
Ghurar: Writing in miniature

127, 128
Two pages from an album
India, 17th century

Ghurar composition signed by Mehmed Nuri Sivasî
Ottoman Turkey, probably Sivas, dated AH 1298 (AD 1886–87)

Gal. 539:1: 17 × 13 cm (within rules), 36.6 × 22.9 cm (overall), 3 lines to the page; Gal. 539:2: 21.7 × 11.2 cm (within rules), 36.6 × 33.5 cm (overall), 4 lines to the page. Written in ghurar outlined in gold and filled with ghurar in black ink, on polished, cream-coloured paper. Illumination in opaque watercolour, ink and gold pigment, with panels of decoration on white laid paper decorated with gold floral scrolls, green bands with vegetal motifs and gold and multi-coloured rules.

Accession nos. Gal. 539:1, 539:2

These pages were once part of an album; traces of glue remain along the side that was bound into the spine. The inscription on the verso of cat. 127 reads: 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful'; that on the recto of cat. 128 reads: 'The Greatest of Names, the All-Knowing, the Wise'. Quranic verses are written in ghurar within the letters of these inscriptions. Cat. 128 is also numbered '124'.

The main text, written in jaldh ‘Illî, is from the surah al-Nâsîr (xlviii, verse 30). It is from Solomon and is (as follows): 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful'. This in turn is composed of lines of ghurar script containing Quranic verses and hadiths. Within the letter šin of the bismillah are verses from surah xxxvi (Yāsîn). Reserved against this is the first verse from surah al-Qalam (lxxvii), which is particularly evocative for calligraphers. The letter nâs with which the surah opens is sometimes taken as a symbol for the inkwell, while the diacritical point on that letter can be interpreted as a drop of ink. Another reference to writing occurs in the form of a hadith ('The Prophet said: 'The first thing that God created was the pen'), which is written within the letter bā‘ of al-râqîm.

The ghurar throughout is well executed, remaining clear and precise even though it has constantly to be adapted to fit the shape of the larger inscription. The calligrapher's colophon is written inside the two decorative points of the long vowel in the word al-râqîm.

The decoration around the composition, consisting of floral sprays and fruit, is relatively crude in its execution.

1. See above, cat. 103.
2. See cat. 129 and 131 in this section.
Ghubār: Writing in miniature

113
Ghubār composition
signed by Nuri Sivasī
Ottoman Turkey, probably Sivas, dated AH 1341 (AD 1921–22)

Written in shahāb, naskh and ghubār in white ink on paper with a glossy, orange coating, mounted on board, 40.5 x 27.5 cm.
Accession no. CA 402

Despite its importance as the design on the imperial flag, and as the symbol of the Republic of Turkey, the star and crescent motif is rarely found in Ottoman calligraphy. This composition may be a patriotic piece representing the national flag. If the calligrapher is to be identified with Mehmed Nuri Sivasī, it would indicate that he was still active forty years after producing cat. 149.

The star is formed from a five-fold repetition of the phrase nār "al-nār, light on light". The crescent contains the same expression in mirror script reserved against a ground in ghubār which repeats two other phrases, "God be praised" and "God the Great be praised".


114
Ghubār composition
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

Written in shahāb, naskh and ghubār in white ink on paper with a glossy, orange coating, mounted on board, 45 x 37.5 cm.
Accession no. CA 464

This anonymous composition consists of surah 2:282 (al-Baqara) written in jali shahāb, chubb and ghubār in white ink on black card, 70 x 73.5 cm, decorated with gold and white rules.
Accession no. CA 464

This anonymous composition consists of surah 2:282 (al-Baqara) written in jali shahāb around a bismillāh in shahāb, which is underlined by the first word of the surah, bismillāh. The outline of the letters, which are filled with gold ink, is the most beautiful of men: God is pleased with him and his family. The text is repeated upside down in an artistic visual echo. The bismillāh script is itself composed of various Qur’ānic surahs in ghubār.

The bismillāh at the beginning of each surah is written in red.

13.5 x 66.4 cm (within inner black rule); written in shahāb and ghubār in black ink on dark blue, brocaded paper. Illumination in opaque watercolour, ink and gold pigment. Mounted on board painted ultramarine, 39.5 x 31 cm, decorated with a band of pinkish-orange paper, gold bands with an embossed key fret, and a blue border with undulating floral scrolls and ribbons in two tones of gold and white.
Accession no. CA 155

The name "Muhammad" is written in shahāb mirror script. The expression "Peace be upon him" is found in the two verses above the name and its reflection. The shahāb is filled with Qur’ānic verses written in ghubār: the entire text of surah Yūnus (XXXV, verses 1–65), followed by verse 88 of the surah al-Qasr (XXVII) and the entire surah al-Nabīyīn (XXXI). The text in the V-shaped shahābs consists of prayers upon the Prophet.

The entire composition is reserved against a gold ground enlivened with blue, green and white floral sprays, which compliment the calligraphy.
in inner black
dotted and gilded in
dug a, Boccolare
in opaque water-
pigment,
painted ultramar-
colored with a
large paper, gold
raised key fret, and
 coordinately floral
in two tones of

5

had" is written in
.The expression
is found in the
title and its
in gilam the
San (or)
well by verse 8 of
(2:212) and the
2 (2:212). The text
bldos contains
Prophet.
position is reserved
and colored with
the floral sprays,
calligraphy.

333

334
Découpage

The art of découpage or paper-cutting has a long history in the Islamic world. It developed in the 13th century partly from the use of leather and paper filigree decoration on the doublures of manuscripts in Iran. Its use was then extended to calligraphy and the most accomplished paper-cutters, or qāṣi's, often won a degree of admiration formerly reserved for the finest calligraphers.

Two methods of découpage were employed. The first involved cutting out words from the material with a very sharp instrument—scissors or a knife—before gluing them on to a coloured ground. This technique had to be executed with extreme precision so as not to tear the hair-like ligatures joining the individual letters. A slightly easier method involved cutting the words out of a sheet and gluing down the sheet itself on to a ground which gave colour to the shapes of the letters. In each case the aim of the qāṣi was to make his cut-outs resemble normal calligraphy as closely as possible. On occasion entire copies of the Qur'an were produced in découpage, by one method or the other.  

Paper-cutting was practised by the Ottomans as early as the 16th century. Its most famous master was Fâhri ibn Yeli, who worked in the latter part of that century and died in 1668, but, as several examples in the Khalil Collection show, the technique continued in use by Ottoman craftsmen and calligraphers until the end of the 19th century.  

From the 18th century, découpage was closely related to the craft of kilip-making. These art forms allowed skilled craftsmen to produce work of high quality in the field of calligraphy although they could not expect to become calligraphers themselves. It was, of course, open to established calligraphers to work in both these fields, and some undoubtedly did so. But whereas kilip-making was simply a means of reproducing compositions, découpage was an extraordinarily time-consuming method by which a calligraphic composition was transformed into a new, and unique, art form.

Some découpage compositions present texts whose letters are connected by vein-like strands or ligatures, as in cat. 138 and 139. Others are framed inscriptions with elaborate backgrounds, which could be a simple mesh or grid (cat. 141), or a complex mass of floral scrolls (cat. 142). In this last case, calligraphy and background were part of the same structure and supported one another without the need to extend the ligatures. The visual effect of all découpage pieces was to add another spatial dimension to a composition, giving an impression of visual depth.

It was normal practice for the original composition to be cut out complete with the signature of the calligrapher, but few paper-cutters signed their work. The occasional exceptions are represented in the Khalil Collection by cat. 142 and 145, which are both signed by the qāṣi, Reki, as well as bearing the names of the calligraphers.

1. An example in the Khalil Collection, 96476, is2726, will be described in Vernout, forthcoming.
3. Cat. 137, the work of Nâki, is dated 1720/21 and cat. 140, by Sîleyman, is dated 1855-6.
It developed as a form of decoration on the pages of manuscripts and the wall paintings formerly made. The words were cut out and pasted on to a background, a technique which gave rise to a new style of decoration. The cut-outs were then mounted near the edges of the pages of the Qur'an or the Koran. Its most famous practitioner was a 13th-century artist named Abū Ḥusayn, whose work continued in the 14th century.

Carpet-making. These carpets are large in size and designed to cover a whole wall or ceiling. They are made of wool or silk and are decorated with intricate patterns and designs. The patterns are based on geometric shapes and natural forms, such as floral motifs and animal figures. The color scheme is dominated by shades of blue, green, and orange, with occasional exceptions. The carpets are both signed by the artist and dated.
Composition signed by Mu'izz al-Din Muhammad al-Hasani
Iran or India, 16th century

6 lines, executed in nasta'liq cut from deep pink laid paper painted with gold trees and shrubs, 23.9 x 13.8 cm, on a background of pale blue, laid paper, with a border including panels of nasta'liq written in black ink, illumination in opaque watercolours and gold pigments. Mounted on card, covered with polished and coated dark beige paper, 35 x 22.2 cm, decorated with a wide green band and gold and coloured rules.

Accession no. CAL17
Published Geneva 1995, cat. 187

The poem has been cut from pink paper and then pasted down onto a sheet of blue paper so that the words appear blue on a pink ground.

The composition is the work of Mu'izz al-Din Muhammad al-Hasani, a calligrapher who is known to have copied a manuscript of 'Arabi's 'I kýr ã Chaqânân, dated 1564, probably in Herat. The only other known example of his work, which is dated 1576, is found on the verso of a famous Decani painting of a yogini that was almost certainly part of an album produced for Muhammad-Quli Qurb Shah, two pages of which are also in the Khalili Collection. Mu'izz al-Din Muhammad may have been one of those Iranian artists who, for various political and financial reasons, emigrated to the Decani during the late 16th century.

The main text is a poem in Arabic:

We have accepted the fate that life has given us:
Knowledge falls to our lot; material wealth to our enemies.
But when truth is soon spent, it is perishable, fleeting.
Knowledge, however, is enduring.
The two words 'am gâfdî ('soon') have mistakenly been elided in the process of cutting out. The triangular panel above the poem contains the phrase 'He is the Conqueror'; rectangular panels around the main text contain non-sequential fragments of Persian verse; and the lower triangle bears the colophon.

2. Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, MS.II.1.37; see cat. 72 and 73.
Two roundels
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

Executed in išshābẖ cursive gilded paper within a ruled area 36 x 31.7 (CAL.320-36 x 36 cm CAL.325).
Mounted on black silk cloth backed with board, 50 x 49.5 cm, decorated with floral sprays, a band, rules and sprinkling, all in gold.
Accession nos CAL.325, 322.

These unsigned examples of décor pages were probably cut by the same person working in concert with, if not actually identifiable as, the calligrapher. The pieces share a design in which a central inscription written within a circle is surrounded by a line of išshābẖ which begins and ends below it. On cat. 328 the central circle encloses the name of the Prophet, followed by the expression 'Peace be upon him.' The surrounding inscriptions are taken from the surah al-Aʿrāf (xxxii, verse 45). The centre of cat. 139 contains the name of God, followed by the invocation, in smaller išshābẖ, 'May His Sublimity be exalted.' The surrounding line is the entire text of surah cxcii (al-Hāfiḍ,). Both lines of išshābẖ begin with the hašālah.

A network of tiny vein-like extensions hold all the elements of both compositions in place.
Composition signed by Süleyman
Ottoman Turkey, dated 1218 (AD 1803–6)
Executed in rubush and red ink on thin blue paper, mounted on album, 27.5 x 16 cm (within inner rule).
Mounted on board, 33 x 26.7 cm.
Accession no. CA2;131
Published Geneva 1995, cat.190

This composition is an excellent example of the paper-cutter's skill. The main part of the design consists of a scroll of red and blue ribbons around the stalk. It reads Amur ın marwara (O Integrity). The outer border consists of a scroll of knots and blossoms. The date, 1218, is written in the lower left-hand corner, and there is a plant in the lower right-hand corner. In itself, this well-known Ottoman composition (nişâf) is relatively simple, and may have been taken from a kalş: the main panel and border were executed separately, and the former was pasted rather crudely on top of the latter. The skill of the paper-cutter is displayed in the background, a mass of scrollwork and floral sprays of such intricacy that the piece of paper from which it was cut looks like lace. The signature, Amur ın Sâûlayman, indicates that it was the qâbi' rather than the calligrapher.

1. See also cat. 161. For an alternative reading of this signature as "Sâûkî", see Geneva 1995, cat.192. For the correct analysis to Sami's signature, see Derman 1975, pp. 73–87.
The calligrapher’s signature word on the outer border of the piece is surrounded by vegetal curves, and the piece is signed—by Rotfa.

See also cat. 108.
The art of rendering calligraphy in gold, using a dried leaf as a matrix, was practised mostly in Ottoman Turkey during the 19th century. It represented one of the last links with medieval craft tradition, in which the perfect execution of a work of art was all-important.

The preparation of these leaves demanded great patience and accuracy, and involved several stages. The leaf, which had to be perfect, was placed between two flat surfaces. If glass was used, blotting paper or another absorbent material was placed between the glass and the leaf. It was then left to dry for a short time, out of direct sunlight to ensure that the leaf did not become too brittle and retained flexibility, and for a further period under a metal net or mesh. Finally, the leaf tissue was pierced with a sharp point and delicately removed, piece by piece, to leave the skeleton of membranes exposed. This was an extremely time-consuming operation; alternatively, the leaf could be left for a longer time until the dermal tissue fell away.1

The leaves most often used might be from trees – the horse chestnut, fig, mulberry or plane – or plants – tobacco, ivy and rose. Of these, the tobacco leaf was the most popular, probably due to its hardy structure, which made it the easiest to prepare. Although the horse chestnut leaf provides a more unusual and challenging shape, its delicacy made it more difficult to prepare and to work on (see, for example, cat.144). The compositions were arranged so that the leaf stalk is either at the bottom, so that the leaf skeleton rises through the composition, or passes through the letters from the right or left.

Compositions were usually applied to the back of the skeletal leaf surface using stencils, although it seems possible that some inscriptions may have been written with a pen, which would have been extremely difficult. The cut stencil was placed over the leaf and ink or pigment was applied through it. It was essential that the pigment be mixed with a good measure of gum arabic, which would help strengthen the leaf structure. Many of the compositions were adapted from earlier ones devised for other media, but they were carefully chosen, and some are true masterpieces of the calligrapher’s art, managing to suggest a monumentality that belies their small size.

Little is known about the artists who practised the art of leaf gilding. The centre of production appears to have been the western Anatolian city of Bursa; there are examples of gilded leaves signed by Mehmet Nuri Efendi, a native of that city, active around 1890,2 and Sanato Mustafa Efendi is also known to have gilded leaves.3 A very interesting example, an ivy leaf signed by an artist called Qadiri and dated AH 1314 (AD 1896–7), is in Istanbul.4

Many of these leaves are of great beauty, but the amount of time and effort necessary to produce them was disproportionate to their extreme fragility and limited life span. In this sense they parallel the human condition, and it comes as no surprise that the art of leaf gilding was popular in Sufi circles, with their emphasis on the temporality of human life. Many ‘golden’ leaves found their way to Konya, the centre of the Mevlevi Sufi order, and a considerable number survive in the Mevlana Museum in that city.

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1. I thank A.M. Karimzadeh-Tahbaz and Dr Z. Cihan Ozsayiner for their account of a meeting with the late calligrapher Amin Barin in Istanbul, at which the technique of leaf gilding was explained. I have been able to confirm the process they described by preparing some leaves in the traditional manner. See also Ozsayiner 1993.
2. For an example of Nuri Efendi’s signed work, see Karimzadeh 1991, 111, p.193.
4. Istanbul University Library, inv.00A.1.Y.6531.
practised mostly on glass, the last links with the all-important, and involved, but flat surfaces. If the glass is held between the glass and the paper to ensure that the layer of gelatin is only a few lacquer the backing and delicately balanced. This was an exacting process, with a longer time period under a dark<br>holder, or a longer time between each layer. Although the ink was made, delicacy made it essential to keep the compositions were balanced and tension rises through the layers. Some were using stencils, others were using a pen, which was a pointed leaf and ink or lacquer. With a good number of the compositions they were carefully balanced to suggest a thought to be expressed.

The centre of production was around 1890, and the example, an example in Istanbul. It is the most necessary to understand the life span. In this sense, it is necessary to understand the art of leaf painting, the art of human life. It is not a simple matter of the Sufi order, and a
The Golden Leaf

144

Composition on chestnut leaf
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

24 x 17 cm (length) w/ red pigment
 Acquisition no. CAT. 16
Published: Cercel 1989

The leaf is inscribed with the names of two persons, which may be drawn in red lead. The composition contains part of the text Yāsīn (vv. 1-2), 'I beg thee to take care (of him). Merciful of those who believe.'

The inscription was designed to fit within the boundaries of an oval, probably modeled after a traditional prayer book. It is not known whether it was intended as a private or public object, or as a form of decoration. It does however illustrate the point that many compositions—perhaps the majority—were adapted from others and reproduced on leaves.

1. Rédo, no date, p. 147.
Composition on a horse chestnut leaf
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

24.5 cm (length) written in nasta’liq in red pigment
Accession no. CAL.161
Published Genoa 1995, cat. 194

The leaf is inscribed with a red pigment which may be gouache, minimum or red lead. The composition is in nasta’liq and contains part of verse 64 from the surah Yāsīn (102), “But God is the best to take care of him and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.”

The inscription was originally designed to fit within an oval. An example of the same composition inside an oval exists among the work of Hüsam Efendi, who died in 1911. We do not know whether Hüsam derived it, or copied it from an earlier design. It does however, illustrate the point that many ‘golden leaf’ compositions—perhaps even the majority—were adapted from existing ones and reproduced in miniature.

1. Rado, no date, p. 139.

Composition on an ivory leaf
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

12.8 x 12.5 cm, written in Ottoman nasta’liq in gold
Accession no. CAL.140

This superbly balanced composition, which reads “I put my trust in God” (tasbihat ‘ala ‘llah), is known to be derived from earlier examples made in the 18th century, though its creator remains anonymous. In this version, the adapter has modified the composition slightly, but to great advantage, by placing the diacriticals of the first letter ‘al‘ over the backward stroke of the letter ‘al‘. In doing so the composition falls, seemingly naturally, into the shape of an ivy leaf.

The inscription is written in nasta’lik, by which the Ottomans meant nasta’liq, but written observing a horizontal base line, rather than one set at a slight angle, as was the Iranian practice. A variety of complex calligraphic effects have been imitated by a stencil. This example illustrates the way in which a stroke can be finely tapered, and then suddenly expanded, an effect which is achieved by the calligrapher altering the slant of the reed pen as he writes.

The boldness of the horizontal strokes contrasts with the extreme brevity of the vertical strokes. This is particularly noticeable in the preposition ‘al‘, which begins with an ‘eye’ shaped like a bird’s head, followed by a truncated ‘al‘ which is barely taller, and ending in an alif masbucha, where the final line is quickly swung back to display the full width of the penstroke. The word alif follows the rules of writing nasta’liq script, where the height of alif is equivalent to that of three dots or thumbtacks made by the pen, in contrast to naskh, where the alif is the equivalent of eight dots in height.

1. See Rado, no date, p. 164, for an example dated 1779.

Composition on a sweet chestnut leaf
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

15.5 x 12.3 cm, written in Ottoman nasta’lik in gold
Accession no. CAL.141

This leaf and the following items (cat. 147–9 and 151) have themes of a recognizably Sufi character. The present example reads “O respected Mevlana” (zdr mevlana), in reference to Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 1273), founder of the Mevlevi Sufi order. Rumi commenced his great work, the Masnavi, thus: “Listen to the lute-reed (flute) which has been separated from its branch; how it complaints, lamenting its banishment from home.” Like the reed flute, the favourite musical instrument of the Mevlevi dervishes, the faded leaf tells the tale of its separation from its origins.

The composition is aligned along the central stem of the leaf and bounded by the letter alif at either side.

Composition on an ivory leaf
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

24 x 9.5 cm, written in Ottoman nasta’lik in gold
Accession no. CAL.163
Published Genoa 1995, cat. 195

This is one of the most interesting examples of a ‘golden leaf’, the sweet chestnut leaf providing an unusual space in which to construct a composition. The complexity of the design echoes that of the plant structure which it covers. The stem acts as a guideline for the script, which seems to flow along it. The inscription, which is unusual for being partly in Turkish, reads şahsiye bade ‘aynmin; dikkatlik 124 varul alif’ (“I drown in the sea of introspection; I plead for your help, O Messenger of God”). It is written in nasta’lik according to Ottoman rules. This text was a popular one in the 19th century.
Composition on a tobacco leaf
Ottoman Turkey, 18th century

148.4 x 11.7 cm, written in gold
Accession no. 146.1.1

This composition has a geometric design that is symmetrical in shape. The text is written in gold on the leaves, creating a visually striking effect. The gold leaf itself is a common material used in Islamic art for its symbolic significance and aesthetic appeal.

149. Composition on a tobacco leaf
Ottoman Turkey, 18th century

14.7 x 10.3 cm, written in gold
Accession no. 146.2.1

The text of the piece is written in a calligraphic style that is both decorative and meaningful. The leaves on which the text is written are carefully selected to enhance the visual impact of the composition. This technique is often used in Islamic art to convey both aesthetic and religious messages.

150. Composition on a tobacco leaf
Ottoman Turkey, 18th century

14.9 x 14.9 cm, written in gold
Accession no. 146.4.1

Several 'stroke' letters are used, creating a dynamic and flowing design. This is a popular technique in Islamic art, especially during the Ottoman period. The final letter of the text is a small, white leaf, which adds an element of surprise and interest to the composition.
Composition on a tobacco leaf
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

Composition on an ivy leaf
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

Composition on a tobacco leaf
Ottoman Turkey, 18th or 19th century

This composition is a monumental
appearance that belies its small size. Its
baldy stated message, *affild ushahda,*
declares the oneness and uniqueness
of God. The design is well-considered,
the letter shapes on the left echoing one
another and balanced by the imposing
vertical on the right. An extended
*farhat* vowel fills the space above the
letter *farhat,*

Composition on a tobacco leaf
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

Several *strokes* are used to write the
letters at a time, creating an unusual
but pleasing design. The technique was
popular in the second half of the 19th
century, especially in Iran. The text
quotes surah al-*Hajj* (22, part of verse
37). The final letters of every word—
nam, law, *farhat,* and *gufa*—are written as
one large loop at the bottom. Examples of
the composition include *Cal.486* in the
Khajji Collection (ex-catalogue).

1. See *Cal.486.*

The Golden Leaf

Composition on an ivy leaf
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

This manuscript composition demonstrates one of the most popular examples of mirror-script technique. It seems to have been devised in the 18th century.

1. Many examples exist. See *Arco 1977.*

Composition on a tobacco leaf
Ottoman Turkey, 18th or 19th century

This leaf depicts the *sakk* or turban of
Mevlana Jalal al-Din Rumi (see *Cal.146,*
one of the most recognizable symbols
of the Mevlevi Sufi order. Sufi maxims
and invocations were often written in
this form.* Rumi was at the height of
his scholastic career when, in his later
thirties, he encountered the Sufi teacher
Shams al-Din Tabrizi, who inspired
him to write his finest poetry. Until
that moment Rumi had worn his
scholar’s turban but after this meeting
he exchanged it for the grey one he
wore for the rest of his life.

1. Rado, no date, pp.206, 207.

Composition on a tobacco leaf
Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

The text invokes Shaykh `Abd al-Qadir
al-Gaylani (d. 1866). As in so many such
compositions, there is a strong upward
emphasis in the pyramidal arrangement of
the letters.

1. See *Cal.146.*
This interesting composition reads al-kasih hudud al-âdha ("the who earns his living is the beloved of God"). The text is composed in the shape of a pearl, here made from the two alifs of the word al-kasih; this format, anwar bismi, was a favourite among 19th-century calligraphers, especially practitioners of jihād hudud. The leading exponent of calligraphic pieces of this type was Mehmed Şefik.  

1. See cat. 149.

At first glance, the almost perfect symmetry of this composition gives the impression that it has been written in mirror script, warshama. It reads 'Know that there is no god but God' (la ilâh illâ l-lah lilâd ilâh). The lâm of lâm ('Know') runs down the leaf-stem and the composition is arranged in a semi-circle around it.

This clever composition uses the saying 'Say something good, or keep silent!' (qul al-khayr wa-illa ishka). The veins and stem of the leaf reinforce the sense of upward motion in the arrangement of the letters. The composition fits the leaf shape perfectly, with the word iskak ('be silent') at the top and wa-illa ('or if not') carefully aligned below, on either side of the stem. The placing of the lâm-âlif combinations at exactly this point in the composition leads the eye upwards to complete the sentence.
Second paragraph of text is missing.
Since the Middle Ages the style of script known as naskh has been the most versatile of all the calligraphic hands employed by Muslims, in the sense that it can be used for any sacred or secular text. Other scripts have had a more limited remit. This is particularly evident in the case of nastā'īq, for, although it has been the most popular calligraphic hand in Iran since the 15th century, nastā'īq has been used only rarely to copy the text of the Qur'an and of prayers. Two related modes, shikasteh and shikasteh-ta'llīq, were never used for the Qur'ānic text itself, although the Persian interlinear translations in 18th- and 19th-century Qur'āns from Iran, and the hadiths placed alongside surah headings, were sometimes written in these scripts. Naskh, on the other hand, was allowed a wider application, although in 18th-century Iran its use was increasingly confined to Arabic texts, and frequently, though not exclusively, to texts of a religious nature. Furthermore, Iranian calligraphers began to specialize in mastery of naskh or nastā'īq or shikasteh, although most would have been competent in more than one hand.

The development of a distinctively Iranian naskh is associated with the calligrapher of cat.168, Mirza Ahmad Nayrizi, who was active between 1636 and 1739. Mirza Ahmad was born in the town of Nayriz in Fars, and his father was called Shams al-Din Muhammad, but nothing more is known of his origins. Mirza Ahmad’s primary master in naskh was Muhammad Ibrahim ibn Muhammad Nasir Qumi, known as Aga Ibrahim Qumi, who worked from 1659 to 1707 (see cat.159), but he also made careful copies of works by the great naskh calligraphers of the past. Some time in the late 17th century Mirza Ahmad settled in Isfahan, where, as cat.159 shows, Muhammad Ibrahim Qumi was living, and where he came to the attention of Shah Sultan Husayn (r. 1694–1722). The Shah appears to have awarded Mirza Ahmad the honorific surname Sultanis, comparable to the surname ‘Abbas used in earlier reigns, for the calligrapher employed it in the colophons of some works written between 1696 and 1706.4 The Shah and his court became important patrons of Mirza Ahmad, who is reputed to have commanded large fees for his work; the total income he received over his lifetime is estimated to have reached 60,000 tīma‘ūns, an incredible sum for the period. Mirza Ahmad is equally celebrated for the modest piety of his character, however, and he is said to have given most of this money away. He also used his wealth to go on pilgrimages, for he was in the holy city of Najaf in Iraq at the end of 1739.5

Mirza Ahmad devoted himself to copying the Qur’an and prayerbooks and to executing calligraphic exercises, all of which survive in quantity: besides cat.168, Mirza Ahmad’s work is represented in the Khalili Collection by two Qur’ans,4 four other manuscripts,7 a number of calligraphic pieces,8 and three examples of lacquer ware decorated with naskh inscriptions of a religious nature.4 From these and from his other work it is clear that his hand was a particularly confident one, characterized by exceptionally well-formed letters. Its most striking features are its relatively large size and the wide spacing of the lines of text. Vowels are given exactly the same weight as consonants, with care taken to ensure that the vowel signs are always placed at exact the same distance above and below the consonants throughout a passage of text. Mirza Ahmad often emphasized the accuracy and perfection of his naskh by including, as a contrast, a short inscription in a casually written nastā'īq or shikasteh, usually with some of the diacriticals omitted, again as in cat.168.

This form of naskh was used in Iran throughout the 19th century as the standard Qur’ānic hand, for which, thanks to its clarity, it was admired swiftly. It was written in various sizes, unlike contemporary Qur’ānic naskh in the Ottoman empire, which was uniform in size and appearance. The same style of script was also employed to write out hadiths and aphorisms, as many of the examples that follow show. Three of these pieces, cat.161–3, were produced by 19th-century calligraphers – Muhammad Husayn Qumī,
Arabic calligraphy was an art form that was highly regarded and appreciated throughout the Islamic world. The calligrapher Mirza Ahmad was known for his work in the naskh script, which was particularly popular in Iran and Iraq. His work was commissioned by important patrons, and his reputation was such that his name was often used as a descriptor for the style of writing. Mirza Ahmad's career spanned several decades, and his contributions to the field of calligraphy are still admired today.

In the 19th century, the Persian script naskh was widely used for official documents, especially in Iran. It was a style of writing that was characterized by its legibility and clarity. Mirza Ahmad's work in this script is a testament to his skill as a calligrapher.

The text from the document reads:

'Ali Àskar Arsânjanî and the poet Visal Shirzâ - after models by Mirza Ahmad himself, and this would seem to support the traditional view that Mirza Ahmad was the progenitor of the naskh current in Iran in the Qajar period.'

Such a development is understandable in the context of the political and economic turmoil that afflicted Iran periodically between the 1720s and the 1780s. Mirza Ahmad survived the murder of his master in 1722 and continued producing work of royal quality for almost two decades. Naskh calligraphers of later generations were proud to associate their skills with him and, his reputation once established, it was only a small step to claim him with innovations he might have been loath to claim himself. This accretion of historical traditions around a historical figure is a familiar process in the development of calligraphic lore and it seems to reflect a need on the part of the practitioners of the craft to identify individual scripts with great masters who 'invented' or 'perfected' them. They were thus provided with focal points in their view of their own history. In fact, the term 'focal point' (Arabic qiblat) was precisely the title given to many of those masters. Fols 30b of cat. 43, for example, contains a copy of some lines by 'Ala' al-Din Tabrizi on which the copyist described him as qiblat al-kutub al-mutaqaddimân wa'l-muta'akkibkin, 'focal point of past and future scribes'.

1. In the colophon of a Qur'an he wrote for Shah Sultan Husayn in 1712-13, he described himself as 'Nayrizi by birth and Ifshani by residence' (Bayani 1742-3, IV, p. 203).
2. Bayani 1742-3, p. 17. This is a more reliable expression of Bayani's view than the entry in Bayani 1742-3, IV, pp. 319-311, 390-4, which was edited from his notes.
3. Bayani 1742-3, p. 11: 1742-3, IV, pp. 319-311, 390-4, which was edited from his notes.
4. A work by Mirza Ahmad dated AH 1110 (AD 1698-9) was written 'in the city of Ifshani' (Bayani 1742-3, IV, p. 22), and in the same year Mirza Ahmad used the surname Sultani.
5. A prayer-book published by Bayani 1742-3, IV, p. 22 was copied by Mirza Ahmad in Najaf in that year.
6. Q2982-6, Q29834. See Bayani & Contadini, forthcoming.
7. Q29835, Q29841, Q29842, Q29859.
8. CAL20, CAL29, CAL18, CAL18, CAL241, CAL279.
9. Q29827, Q29870, Q29875.
10. See Khalili, Robinson & Stanley, forthcoming.
11. See Bayani 1742-3, p. 17, for example.
12. See Bayani 1742-3, IV, p. 22.
13. In the case of painting, for example, the names of Muhammad Zaman and 'Aliqal al-Jabane, court artists to Shah Sohrab and Shah Sultan Husayn, sound large in both the lore and practice of the latter 18th and the 19th centuries. See Ebra 1989.
The Nayarzi tradition

158
Composition signed by Muhammad Arif Yaqut Raqm Khan

India, 17th century

15.5 x 11.8 cm (within inner rules); 4 lines to the page, written in naskh and nisrī in black ink on cream paper, probably wave. Illumination in black ink, gold and coloured pigments. Mounted on board, 23.2 x 16.1 cm, decorated with cream and blue borders with gold floral scrolls and gold and coloured rules.

Accession no. CAL.173

The state of Iranian naskh before the advent of Mirza Ahmad Nayarzi may be judged from this piece, for Muhammad Arif was an Iranian who emigrated to the Mughal court in the 17th century. In India he was given the title yaqut raqm abn, 'the one who writes like Yaqut', by Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58). His nephew, Jamatullah, was also one of his pupils and copied a Qur'an, part of which is in the Khalili Collections. Muhammad Arif's most famous pupil, however, was the young prince who later became the Emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707).

The text consists of two short aphorisms, the second being the famous saying attributed to Plato, 'Calligraphy is spiritual geometry made manifest by a physical instrument.'

The decoration of the borders is in 18th-century, late Mughal style. The number '56' written upside down in the upper cream border suggests that the text on this page once formed part of a sequence.

2. Quayy, see Bayani & Contadini, forthcoming.

159
Composition signed by Muhammad Ibrahim Qumi

Iran, Isfahan, dated Shaban 1205 (April-May 1693)

19.4 x 14.3 cm (within inner rules); 23 lines to the page (including colophon), written in naskh and nisrī in black ink on marbled cream, laid paper. Illumination in gold. Mounted on board, 40 x 31 cm, decorated with a floral scroll in gold on white and gold and coloured rules.

Accession no. CAL.1414

This is the work of Muhammad Ibrahim Qumi who was the teacher of Mirza Ahmad Nayarzi, and who styles himself here as a maqshahib ('Illuminator'). Presumably Mirza Ahmad became his pupil after his arrival in Isfahan at some time in the 1690s.

The text is a hadith of Imam al-Risāla and concerns a famine among the 'Children of Israel'. It is written in a fine, large, bold naskh, one of the earliest examples of the hand that Iranian calligraphers began to employ for all religious texts in Arabic. The format is somewhat eccentric, the text being divided into two panels of diagonal text arranged so that the lines meet at right angles in the centre of the page. The colophon is in nisrī, and gives the date and place of completion, a practice which became commonplace among 17th- and 18th-century Iranian masters.

The paper on which the text is written appears to have been marbled in pale brown, and the irregular patterns later transformed into birds and animals by fine gold outlining added after the text was written.

1. Bayani 1939, p. 53; Bayani 1934-58, ii, pp. 63, 616, no. 549.

160
Album page with compositions signed by Ahmad Nayarzi

Iran, dated 1311 A.H. (1644-57)

3 sheets, mounted as one, 29.1 x 21.2 cm (overall text area). 6 lines to the page (upper right), 7 lines (middle right), 14 lines (lower right), 9 lines (lower left), 11 lines (middle left) and 7 lines (upper left) written in naskh and shahrist in black and crimson ink on pale cream, coated paper. Illumination in black and red ink, opaque water-colours and gold pigment. Mounted on board, 35.6 x 20.9 cm, decorated with a blue border carrying polychrome arabesque panels and floral scrolls; the palmette scroll in the lower left-hand corner is part of the original.

Accession no. CAL.163

Although only two of these pieces, which consist of religious texts, prayers, hadiths, and Qur'anic verses, are signed by Mirza Ahmad Nayarzi they are all his work, assembled from different sources. The Qur'anic quotations include the surah al-Fātiha, at the lower left, probably written as a gift. The prayer on the lower right was commissioned by a certain Muhammad Husayn.

The page consists of three originals: the four squares above are on a single piece of paper; the two panels below are each from a separate original.
Two prayers copied by Muhammad Husayn Qa’ini after Ahmad Nayrizi
Iran, dated AH 1271 (AD 1854–5)
17.5 x 14 cm (within brown band);
16 lines to the page, including those in the margin, written in naskh in black
ink on off-white laid paper. Mounted
on card, 26.7 x 16.9 cm, backed with
laid paper and decorated with framing
bands of brown and yellow paper.
Accession no. CAL.88

Other works by Muhammad Husayn
have been recorded, but little is known
about the calligrapher other than his
full name, Sayyid Muhammad Husayn
al-Husayni Qa’ini.1
This piece must once have been
mounted in an album; it has been cut to
its current dimensions and the verso of
the card on which it is mounted shows
signs of having been bound into a
volume.
1. Bayani 1344–53, vi, p. 228. no. 357.

Composition copied by ‘Ali ‘Askar Arsanjani Shirazi after Ahmad Nayrizi
Iran, dated AH 1287 (AD 1870–71)
20.3 x 10.4 cm (within inner rules);
12 lines to the page, including one in
the margin, written in naskh in green,
red, yellow and orange opaque water-
colours on paper painted black and
varnished. Mounted on board, 30.7 x 20.5 cm, decorated with framing
bands of grey and dark blue tinted
papers with gold and coloured rules.
Accession no. CAL.29

‘Ali ‘Askar, called the ‘naskh-writing
(naskh-nastaliq), was a well-known calli-
grapher in Shiraz. His father and son
were both scribes, and there are copies
of Qur’ans by both ‘Ali ‘Askar and his
son, Muhammad Shafi’, in the Khalili
Collection.2 That by ‘Ali ‘Askar is
dated 1277–8 and a religious manu-
script copied by him, also in the
Collection,3 is dated 1283–4, showing
that the calligrapher’s career spanned
more than 50 years.

It is not clear whether the original
text as written by Ahmad Nayrizi in
AH 1279 (AD 1870–71) featured lines of
script in different colours, or whether
these were the contribution of the
copyist.
1. QRTS 356, QRTS 358; see Bayani &
Consadine, forthcoming, Part Two.
See also Bayani 1345–53, iv, pp. 110,
111, no. 312.
2. 1633/38, a copy in Arabic of
al-Suhayl al-Ramah.
165
Hadith copied by
Vizāl Shārźni after
Ahmad Nāyţrzi
Iran, dated AH 1258 (AD 1842–3)

18.3 x 15.6 cm (within inner rules); 16 lines to the page, written in naskh in black ink on yellowish-cream paper; Illumination in black ink and gold pigment. Mounted on coloured card, 23.2 x 22.3 cm, decorated with a pale blue border and gold rules.
Accession no. CA 161

These few lines contain the Prophet’s comments when asked about tawjīd, the unity of God. They are well written, but what makes them of great interest is the eight-line colophon: ‘I copied [this] from the hand of my teacher, who is Muhammad Ibrahim al-Qumî, May God ease his resting place. I am the sinful slave Ahmad Nāyţrzi, May he be forgiven, in Jamuza 1256 of the holy, respected and blessed Hijārā. I am its second copyist, Wilāl the Poet in 1258.’

This piece thus documents one strand of the Iranian nakkâh. As an example of a composition by a famous master being copied several times, it may be compared with cat. 75, in which Muhammad Celâliddîn copied several hadīths after Hafiz Osman who in turn had copied them from originals by Şeyb Hamshâhî.

1. See Soudavar 1992, appendix 2, especially nos. 17, p. 44.2

164
Composition signed
by Vizāl
Iran, dated AH 1258 (AD 1842–3)

18.3 x 15.9 cm (within inner lines); 15 lines to the page, written in naskh and nasta’lîq in black ink on white, laid paper, probably coated. Illumination in black ink, gold and coloured pigments. An original mount may have been pasted onto modern boards, 23.2 x 22.4 cm, decorated with four framing bands of tinted paper and gold and black rules.
Accession no. CA 168

The text is a description of the wolf by the ‘Unqî al-Farâzi. It was copied in a large naskh hand by Muhammad Shâfî Shârźni, also known as Mirza Râchâk or, more commonly, by his poetic pen-name (nakkâh), Vizāl. One of the best-known Iranian calligraphers and poets of the last century, he died in 1845–6.

1. Bayâni 1943–55, II, pp. 75–6, no. 1097. For work by his son, Muhammad ibn Vizāl, see cat. 54, above.
Two compositions
Abu'l-Qu'ais Minshawi
Iznik, dated AH 1289

3 sheets, within line (fols. 8v-10r), 12.4 x 11.7 cm
written in naskh in blue and black ink.
Illumination: stippled gold pages.
Dimensions: 30.5 x 20.4 cm (ca.
 pig-blue, laid paper.
bands of dark blue
pink-tinted paper and
coloured rules.

Ibn 'Ali Riza Abu'l-
known from several
beginning of the
of which was extant.
Two examples,
orally part of a
next the text has
three sections, indi-
stroke or simply bi-
consists of prayer
lines running in dif-
many words and is
and there are occas-
measurement, but
overall construction
thought out.
Each page is sign-
twice, using the ph-
acters/sizes ("write"
interesting assertion
ried nature of the

1. Hayn 1341-1481.
2. The Arabic word
mean 'somewhere'.
Two compositions signed by Abu’l-Qasim Shirazi

Iran, dated 1229 (AD 1813-14)

2 sheets, within inner rules 19 x 13 cm (CAL.18.1), 18.4 x 12.4 cm (CAL.18.2); written in naskh in black ink on cream paper. Illumination in black ink and stippled gold pigment. Mounted on card, 30.3 x 20.7 cm (CAL.18.1), 30.3 x 20.4 cm (CAL.18.2) backed with pale blue laid paper and decorated with bands of dark blue and watermelon-pink tinted paper and gold and coloured rules.

Accession no. CAL.18.1, CAL.18.2

Ibn Ali Riza Abu’l-Qasim Shirazi is known from several pieces produced at the beginning of the 19th century, one of which was executed in Tehran.1 These two examples of his work were originally part of an album. On each sheet the text has been divided into three sections, indicated by extended strokes or simply by horizontal lines. It consists of prayers and hadiths, the lines running in different directions; many words and letters are repeated and there are occasional notations of measurement, but it is clear that the overall construction has been carefully thought out.

Each page is signed and dated at least twice, using the phrase mashqah mašra‘ijan ("written in haste"), an interesting assertion given the contrived nature of the composition.


The Arabic word mashq originally meant ‘something written in haste’.

Composition signed by Ibn Muhammad Shafi’ Tabrizi Surkhbri

Iran, Tabriz, dated 7 Safar 1334 (6 December 1818)

28.9 x 19 cm (within inner rules); 7 horizontal lines to the page, continuing in 5 panels of diagonal lines, written in naskh and niga‘ in black ink bleeding brown on off-white, coated paper. Illumination in black ink and gold pigment. Mounted on board, 38.3 x 27.6 cm, decorated with gold and coloured rules and framing bands of tinted paper.

Accession no. CAL.161

Muhammad Shafi’ Ibn Muhammad ‘Ali Tabrizi was one of the best known calligraphers of the 19th century Tabriz. His father and his son, both called Muhammad Ali, were also calligraphers. Many examples of work by Muhammad Shafi’ are known, including more than 30 copies of the Qur’an.2 One of his latest recorded works, his thirty-third Qur’an, dated 1818, is in the Khalili Collection.2

The text of this elaborate composition consists of the surah al-Fatihah and the ‘Throne Verse’ from the surah al-Baqara (2; verse 255). The text was written diagonally in a dedication to Mirza Ahmad and a lengthy colophon, including a complicated date, ‘On Sunday, of the first tenth of the second month, in the fourth year of the fourth decade, of the third century of the second millennium’, that is, Sunday, 7 Safar 1334 (6 December 1818).

The main colophon on the last line follows a slightly different format. In some of Muhammad Shafi’s colophons published by Bayani, as in his Qur’an in the Khalili Collection, the calligrapher used the same formula, namely, ‘a stranger, of Tabrizi birth and home’.

2. Bayani 1345-57, p. 20, 30.32.

The original page seems to have included the area up to the outer edge of the blue band.
Composition by Ahmad Shams al-Din ibn Muhammad

Mirror of the Names of the Imam

Inscribed on orange ground with gold initials. The text is handwritten in black ink on a gold- and silver-painted paper. The calligraphy is of the finest quality, with intricate and elegant flourishes. The page measures 30.5 x 22 cm. It is a rare example of 14th-century Persian manuscript art.

Acc. no. 4151

Mira Shams al-Din Husayn was a well-known calligrapher of the late 13th- and early 14th centuries. His work is characterized by elegance and precision. This piece is one of his finest works, and it is considered a masterpiece of Persian calligraphy.

1. According to M. A. Fasi, 1939, p. 60, no known work by AH from the 14th century is catalogued in the Museum's holdings.
2. Cat. no. 4151 (cat. no. 4151).
169 Composition signed by Ibn Muhammad Husayn Ahmad Shamlu
Iran, dated AD 1228 (AD 1813–14)
9 lines to the page, written in naskh on thin grey-blue ink on laid paper, painted orange and varnished.
Illuminated in opaque watercolours and gold pigments. Mounted on board, 30.7 x 22.4 cm, decorated with a border with a gold floral scroll on a brown ground, and margins with a floral scroll in two tones of gold on cream.

Accession no. CAL.132

Mirza Ahmad Shamlu, Ibn Muhammad Husayn was a native of Mashhad and a well-known calligrapher of the early Qajar period famous for his execution of the nasta’liq and shikasteh scripts as well as naskh. He was the teacher of Princes Muhammad Ali, son of Fath Ali Shah, and lived well into the 19th century, dying in Mashhad in the 1840s. This piece appears to be the earliest dated example in his hand.1

This piece of Arabic prose is similar in concept to cat. 172, below, involving the repetition of identical letters and complex grammatical constructions. It was written, presumably as a gift, for Aqa Muhammad Sadqi. The Khalil Collection contains another piece by Ahmad Shamlu, also written for Muhammad Sadqi and dated one year later, in which he states that he came from Mashhad.2 In both cases the scribe writes his name putting his patronymic first, a practice common among 19th-century Iranian calligraphers.

1. According to Mehdi Bayani (1945–51, p. 54, no. 767) the earliest known work by Ahmad Shamlu dates from a year later, 1802–3.
2. CAL.13 (ex-catalogue).

170 Hadis signed by Zayn al-Abidin Mahalati
Iran, Tehran, dated Friday 21 (sic) Ramadhan 1292 (21 October 1775)
16.7 x 9.5 cm (within inner rules); 16 lines to the page, written in naskh and nasta’liq in black ink on varnished paper. Illumination in black ink and coloured pigments. Mounted on board, 27.5 x 18.1 cm, decorated with framing bands of tinted paper and gold and coloured rules.

Accession no. CAL.214

Several dated works by Zayn al-Abidin are known and demonstrate that he was active from 1183 until 1900.3 He produced manuscripts, Qur’an and pieces of calligraphy for prominent Qajar notables. Two Qur’ans copied by him in the Khalil Collection show that, in addition to working in Tehran, he was active in Qum in 1844 and in Isfahan in 1883.4 A part from its secure provenance, the main interest of this piece is that part of the text relates to calligraphy. It reads, ‘2. Peace be upon him.3 Learn the rules of calligraphy. O well-born. 4. For what is a fine hand if not an adornment for the well-born person? If you are rich, a fine hand is an adornment and if you are needy, it is the best means to earn a livelihood.’5 Qazi Ahmad al-Ghulam-i Hamza attributes these words to Ali ibn Abs Tabib.6

1. Listed in Bayani (1945–51, p. 17, pp. 68, 68–69, 68–70, 70–71, 70–75) who gives no biography. 2. CAL.13 (and CAL.14) respectively; see Bayani & Contadini, forthcoming.
Two composite panels.
Abu'l-Hasan I
Iran, dated 1163

2 sheets, both v, v (inner rules); 14 lines written in naskh in blue and white paper, 2. Illumination in blue and gold pen and gold and colo.
Accession no. C.17.1

These compositions included in an album, the text — prayers, formulas of a prophetic nature — were to be framed and hung. The text invokes protection.
Cat.173 carries the title and the date, cat.174.
173, 174

Two compositions signed by Abu’l-Hasan Musawi

Iran, dated AH 1265 (AD 1849–50)

2 sheets, both 18.5 x 6.4 cm (within inner rules); 23 lines to the page, written in naskh in black ink on pale blue wave paper, 21 x 9.3 cm.

Illumination in black ink, water-colours and gold pigment, with a gold floral scroll with coloured highlights and gold and coloured rules.

Accession no. CALE85.1, CALE85.2

These compositions were probably included in an album at some stage, but the texts – prayers, Qur’anic verses and formulas of a prophylactic or talismanic nature – were perhaps intended to be framed and hung on a wall to invoke protection.

Cat.173 bears the scribe’s signature and the date, cat.174 the date only.
A compendium of Arabic scripts

Calligraphy by Mohamed Zakariya

The dissemination of the Arabic script accompanied the spread of Islam, from the 7th century onwards, across an area stretching from the Atlantic to western China. From simple beginnings in western Arabia, the script evolved into six basic forms — naskhi, thuluth, naskh-e-qasq, rayhna, tawqi' and riqa' — all of which were employed in the central Islamic lands by the 16th century. Each of these scripts developed several variations, some of which were classified as new scripts in their own right. Nasta’liq, abkastah and dhu'ali' evolved from ta'liq; jazab evolved from riqa'; ruq'ah evolved from naskh. The scripts of North and West Africa, maghribi, Andalus and Sudan, stand somewhat apart from those which developed in central Islamic lands after the 10th century. Nevertheless, the African varieties probably derive directly from the earliest forms of Arabic script used in Western Arabia. Local variations also appeared in India, China and Indonesia.

In order to illustrate the differences which exist within and between the main families of scripts and their numerous derivations, Mohamed Zakariya has written the text of the following prayer, the Mudhkal of Ibn al-Hajj, using each of these forms in succession:

Allahuma bi-ni'mika ihdindya wa bi-fada'ika istaghnaya, wa fi kanafiqa nushbina wa ansayna, anta al-'awad fa-lā shay' qahibka wa anta al-akhir fa-lā shay' ha'da'ka, na'adhubu hikma min al-fadal wa'll-kasal wa min 'adhab al-qahar wa min fitnat al-qhina wa'l-faqir.

'O God, by Your light guide us and by Your favour enrich us. Let us dwell in Your shadow in the morning and in the evening. You were the beginning; before You there was nothing. You will be the end: after You there will be nothing. Save us from failure and slothfulness, from the torment of the tomb, and the troubles of [excessive] wealth and poverty.'


All the examples by Mohamed Zakariya are reproduced at 50% of their original size.
Early forms
7th–8th century

Hijazi

Abbasid scripts
8th–11th century

Kufic
Diroche 'Group D'

West Kufic
Déroche 'New Style 1'
A compendium of Arabic scripts

Small andalus

Thuwil maghribi

Scribal maghribi

Qur’anic maghribi

West African stilo
t

The Six Classic Hands

jalih (large) al-muhabbaq
after Ibn al-Bawwab (d. 1051)
Cat. 1

Incipit on the verso:
1. It is one of the very illuminating writings of Yaquta Muta’ami in in a precious [high-priced] gem. The Supreme Councilor Taqi Danish, Splendor of the Army, in Shiraz in Dhu’l-Hijja 1334 [June 1916].

2. It is evident that it is one of the very excellent writings of Yaquta Muta’ami, may his grave be fragrant. Abu’l-Hassan Napolytrini, and a seal that reads, ‘Imad al-Mamlik, 1336 [AD 1920–21].

3. It is one of the illuminating writings of Yaquta Muta’ami, may his grave be fragrant. ‘Ali Muhammad Tahirani, with a seal that reads, Splendor of the Divan.

4. He, Mighty God. This piece is one of the illuminating writings of Yaquta Muta’ami Tahirani, and there is no doubt or suspicion about it. It is the seal [of the servant of God], Ibrahim Mas’ud-Aqil, 21 Muharram 1146 [25 July 1735], with a seal that reads, Ibrahim [116] 1145 [AD 1734–35].

Cat. 2

Written by Yaquta al-Muta’ami in the year six hundred and eighty-one [AD 1281–82], thanking God, praised be He.

Cat. 3

Foilo 7b

Written by the one needy [for God’s favour], Durwiz Muhammad, foilo, 984 [AD 1176–77].

Cat. 4

Foilo 7f, top, an owner’s inscription:

Cat. 5

Caal, foilo 9.

Copied by ‘Abd al-Raqi.

Cat. 6

Foilo 186:

The weakest of scarcest, Muhammed al-Wahi ... after an original by ‘Uthman Efendi ... in the Hijri year one thousand one hundred and ninety-nine [AD 1784–85].

Cat. 7

Foilo 17a.

Written by the one needy [for God’s favour], Sayyid Abdallah, thanking God, praised be He, and praying for the Prophet and all his family, in the year ...

Folio 26a.

Copied by the slave in need of the mercy of his Almighty Lord, Sayyid Abdallah.

Cat. 10

Folio 76c.

Copied by ‘Umar al-Wafi in the year 1192 [AD 1784–85].

Cat. 11

Foilo 11c.

Copied by the sinful one, Sayyid ‘Uthman, known as ‘the thankful’, 1193 [AD 1787].

Cat. 12

Written by the weak of scarcest, Sayyid Muhammad al-Sawaji, clerk to the Chief Secretary of the Ministry of War, [and a pupil of Sayyid Muhammad al-Khushti, in the Hijri year] 1218 [AD 1806–7].

Cat. 13

Copied by the one needy [for God’s favour], Mustafa Dedeh, son of Manshul, known as the son of the Shajik.

Cat. 14

Copied by the one needy [for God’s favour], ‘Imad al-Hassani, May he be forgiven, in the Abode of Authority, heavenly Qazvin.

Cat. 15

Copied by the one needy [for God’s favour], ‘Imad al-Hassani, May he be forgiven, in the Abode of Authority, heavenly Qazvin.

Cat. 17

The one needy [for God’s favour], Gulham Riza. May he be forgiven, in the year 1187 [AD 1775–76].

Cat. 18

It was written by Durr ‘Ali Khan, the treasurer, on Friday when a strong wind was blowing, in the month of Jamadi is, the year 1217 [February–March 1835].

Cat. 19

It was written on the eve of the second of the months of Rajab al-Murajib, which is the eve of the Royal New Year, the year of the chelent: Durr ‘Ali Khan, the Officer of the Royal Court, should keep this piece. On the aforementioned month, the year 1217 [March 1835].

Cat. 20

Thank be to God the Benefactor to all the World, (Who) by His grace has taught Man what he know not. Bless him for whom He created the throne and the pen, and bless his family and companions with the presence of this [writing]. Now I have been hired by the writer of this
Cat. 21 and 32
From right to left:
1. Thanks be to God Who honoured us with the knowledge of writing. Blessings be upon Muhammad who decreed that his community take up writing, as it has been said: "Bestow on your children the gift of writing." Now, I have licensed the writer of this blessed Bihāy, Sayyid Muhammad al-Zubī, may God increase his calligraphic skill and knowledge. I am the poor wretch Sayyid Hafiz 'Alī Rādi, a student of 'Alī Khan and Sulaymān al-Wahhāb, may God pardon them both, on 11 Muharram 1387 (14 November 1967).
2. Thanks be to God Who honoured us with the knowledge of writing. Blessings be upon Muhammad who decreed that his community take up writing, as it has been said: "Bestow on your children the gift of writing." Now, I have licensed the elegant writer of this blessed Bihāy, Sayyid Muhammad al-Zubī, to use the words "written by," I am his teacher, Sayyid Muhammad Sulaymān al-Shikā, a student of Sayyid Hafiz 'Alī Rādi, may God pardon them both, on 11 Muharram 1387 (14 November 1967).
3. Thanks be to God Who exalted us with the craft of writing. Blessing be upon the Best of mankind and his family, early in the morning and late in the evening. Now, I have licensed the writer of this beautiful Bihāy, Sayyid Muhammad al-Zubī, may God increase his knowledge and calligraphic skill. I am the poor wretch Sayyid Muhammad al-Hilmi, a student of Sayyid 'Abd al-Karim, may God pardon them both, on 11 Muharram 1387 (14 November 1967).
4. Thanks be to God Who acquainted us with the knowledge of writing. Blessing be upon Muhammad who decreed that his community take up the Right Way and the True Law. Now, I have licensed the copy of this noble Bihāy, Sayyid Muhammad al-Zubī, may God increase his knowledge and discernment. I am the poor wretch Muhammad Rāzi, a student of 'Abd al-Rahim Hilmi, may God pardon them both, on 11 Muharram 1387 (14 November 1967).

Cat. 22
Lower right-hand panel:
I have licensed the writer of this covered, blessed piece, Muhammad al-Hamdi, may God lengthen his life, increase his learning, knowledge and perfection. I am the sīfl Muhammad al-Zubī, known as 'the baker,' in the year 1345 (1926-27).
لا يوجد نص يمكن قراءته بشكل طبيعي من الصورة المقدمة.
للاقف الفجع يؤثر أن عما يسمى بعد الفجع.

في 182.

فول 20a, bottom panel: Copied by the one nearly [for God's favor], the poor wretch, 'Ala' al-Din al-Tahirizi, in 987 [HM 1179–90].

فول 20a, a real that reads: The Lord has adorned her with the glorious shadow of charity, Gohwar Sultan, daughter of Shah (im).  

فول 20b, central panel: Copied by the one nearly [for God's favor], the wretched woman; or, original by Yaqūt al-Ma'amī's as I am the slave nearly (for God's favor), 'Ala' al-Din al-Tahirizi, in 987 [HM 1179–90].

فول 20c, central panel, left and right: Copied from an original by Yaqūt al-Ma'amī's as I am the slave nearly (for God's favor), 'Ala' al-Din al-Tahirizi, in 987 [HM 1179–90].

فول 20d, central section, lower right-hand panel: Written by the one nearly [for God's favor], the groom: 'Abd al-Samad, in the year nine hundred and eighty-four (July 1376), praising God.  

فول 21b, bottom panel, left and right: Written by the mean slave nearly (for God's favor), praised by him: 'Abd al-Ga'āf al-Tahirizi, in the year nine hundred and ninety-nine (AD 1590–91).

فول 22a, lower right: Copied by 'Abd al-Aqāf.

فول 22b, second panel, left and right: Copied by 'Ala' al-Din al-Tahirizi.

فول 23a, upper panel: Copied by the mean slave, Muhammad Husayn al-Husayni, in the year 1553 [HM 1578–83].

فول 23b, lower right: Written by 'Abd al-Aqāf in 793 [HM 1588–91].

فول 23c, lower right-hand panel: Copied by Muhammad in the Mashhad shrine—after an original by the founder of the mansion and former scribe, 'Abd al-Ga'af al-Tahirizi, May God make his grave fragrant, and make Paradise his dwelling, on Sunday, Rabi' al-awwal 12.

فول 24, penultimate panel: Copied by the slave nearly for the money of God the Merciful, Muhay, in the first ten days of Muharram the Forbidden in the year eight hundred and sixty [December 13–20, 1465], thanking God.  

فول 25a, second panel, left and right: Copied, praising God, by the one in need of God, 'Abd al-Aqāf, during the year one thousand and ninety-four [AD 1684].

فول 25b, centre right: The slave 'Abd al-Aqāf.

فول 25c, central panel: Written by 'Abd al-Aqāf in 787 [HM 1587–90].

فول 25d, lower right: Written by the one nearly (for God's favor), the mean slave, knowing the master and former scribe, Sams al-Bayrungari, May God improve his station, in the 'Abode of Authority' near, May he be preserved from calamities.

فول 26a, lower left-hand panel: Written by the one nearly (for God's favor), 'Abd al-Aqāf, in the year one thousand (AD 1699–1700).

فول 26b, second panel: Written by the one in need of God, 'Abd al-Aqāf, in the year one thousand and ninety-four [AD 1684].

فول 26c, centre left: Written by 'Abd al-Aqāf.

فول 26d, central panel: Written by 'Abd al-Aqāf, in the year one thousand and ninety-four [AD 1684].

فول 26e, lower right: Written by the one nearly (for God's favor), the mean slave, known to the master: May God make the grave fragrant, and make Paradise his dwelling, on Thursday, Rabi' al-awwal 1.

فول 27a, centre right: Written by the mean slave, Yārī, in the year 1093 [HM 1664].

فول 27b, right-hand panel: The mean slave, Yārī.

فول 27c, lower right: Copied by Yaqūt al-Ma'amī's.

فول 27d, lower left-hand panel: Written by the one nearly (for God's favor), 'Abd al-Aqāf, in the year one thousand and ninety-four [AD 1684].

فول 27e, lower right-hand panel: Written by the one nearly (for God's favor), 'Abd al-Aqāf, in the year one thousand and ninety-four [AD 1684].

فول 28, right-hand panel: The mean slave, Yārī.

فول 28a, second panel: Written by 'Abd al-Aqāf, in the year one thousand and ninety-four [AD 1684].

فول 28b, centre right: Written by 'Abd al-Aqāf.

فول 28c, central panel: Written by 'Abd al-Aqāf, in the year one thousand and ninety-four [AD 1684].

فول 28d, lower right: Written by the one nearly (for God's favor), the mean slave, praised by the master: May God make the grave fragrant, and make Paradise his dwelling, on Thursday, Rabi' al-awwal 12.

فول 29a, second panel: Written by the mean slave, Yārī, in the year 1093 [HM 1664].

فول 29b, centre right: The mean slave, Yārī.

فول 29c, central panel: Written by 'Abd al-Aqāf in the year one thousand and ninety-four [AD 1684].

فول 29d, lower right: Written by the one nearly (for God's favor), the mean slave, praised by the master: May God make the grave fragrant, and make Paradise his dwelling, on Thursday, Rabi' al-awwal 12.

فول 30, right-hand panel: The mean slave, Yārī.

فول 31, upper panel: Copied by the one nearly (for God's favor), 'Abd al-Aqāf, in the year one thousand and ninety-four [AD 1684].

فول 32, central panel: Written by 'Abd al-Aqāf in the year one thousand and ninety-four [AD 1684].

فول 33, lower right: Written by the one nearly (for God's favor), the mean slave, praised by the master: May God make the grave fragrant, and make Paradise his dwelling, on Thursday, Rabi' al-awwal 12.

فول 34, right-hand panel: The mean slave, Yārī.

فول 35a, bottom panel: Written by the one nearly (for God's favor), 'Abd al-Aqāf, in the year one thousand and ninety-four [AD 1684].

فول 35b, central panel: Written by 'Abd al-Aqāf in the year one thousand and ninety-four [AD 1684].

فول 35c, lower right: Written by the one nearly (for God's favor), the mean slave, praised by the master: May God make the grave fragrant, and make Paradise his dwelling, on Thursday, Rabi' al-awwal 12.

فول 36a, second panel: Written by the one nearly (for God's favor), the mean slave, praised by the master: May God make the grave fragrant, and make Paradise his dwelling, on Thursday, Rabi' al-awwal 12.
Cat. 51  
Folio 1a: The slave 'Abd al-Majid the shahidah-writer.

Folio 1b: Since Mira Kozak spoke in the absence of the late Darwish 'Abd al-Majid, saying: "... that the Darwish wrote the mahfi hand well, after that, whatever the deceased wrote was in that hand ..." The one [nearly for God's mercy] 'Abd al-Jawad 'Aqa' Ifrahimi.

Folio 2a: The one nearly [for God's favour], 'Abd al-Majid. 1183 (5876-70).

Folio 2b: It is one of the very fine and correct qas'as of Mzamer Darwish 'Abd al-Majid, mercy upon him. Around four niamas may be sent [in payment]. The one nearly [for God's favours], 'Abd al-Jawad 'Aqa' Ifrahimi. May he be forgiven.

Folio 3a: Dated the month of Ramadan, one thousand one hundred and eighty [February–March 1763]. The slave 'Abd al-Majid. 1190.

Folio 3b: It is one of the excellent calligraphic examples of Darwish 'Abd al-Majid. No one has a qa'īb like it. 1167 (5581-55), underneath, an inscription that reads, This attestation is by 'Abd al-Jawad 'Aqa' Ifrahimi. [I]s Liqaf 1146 (55 February 1946), 'Majidl] Bayani, an oral seal that reads, Muhammad Zeki. 1167 [5581-55]; a square seal that reads, My own affairs I trust to God, the slave hoping [for God's favour] Muhammad. 1147 [5532-52].

Folio 4a: Raw. Rare. This qa'īb is one of the very fine examples of His Honour the Master Darwish 'Abd al-Majid, mercy upon him. In fact, such perfect qa'ībs are rarely found. Two or three remain to be sent [in payment]. The one nearly [for God's favour], 'Abd al-Jawad, the wretched one of Iftahum.

Cat. 52  
Folios 5-6: Muhammad Rehim, 1117 (5093-E).

Cat. 53  
Folio 6b: Written by the sinful one, 'Imad al-Husayni, May his sin be forgiven.

Folio 6a: The one nearly [for God's favour], the poor wretch Mr 'Ali, May he be forgiven.

Folio 6c: Copied by the one nearly [for God's favour], the poor wretch Mr 'Ali.

Folio 6d: Written by the one nearly [for God's favour], the sinful 'Imad al-Husayni, May he be forgiven, with the seal of Muhannan Khan, minister of Nadir Shah Afshar from 1736 until 1746, Guidance from the Mullah.

Folio 6e: Copied by the slave 'Abd al-Majid. In the 'Abode of Authority', Iftahum, for the sincere friend Mulla 'Abd al-Samad... Mazandaran in Jumada ii.

Folio 6f. Centre left: It was copied from the writing of the great master Shab's mercy upon him, in the month of Jumada i of the year (given) in the blessed Record Office of the capital Tehrān, May it continue to be guarded and protected.

Cat. 54  
Written by the sinful slave Mahmud, son of Vizal, May his grave be fragrant, called (Zakīn, 1147 [5535-5]–15).

Cat. 55  
(1) Handullah, better known as 'the son of the Shaykh', thanksgiving (God).

(2) Handullah, better known as 'the son of the Shaykh'... The act of writing it was completed... in the 'Abode of Companions', Constantinoipe... in the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah the Nūbī, in the year nine hundred and one of the birth of the Prophet (10–20 August 1466).

(3) Written by the one nearly [for God's favour], 'Ushmar, known as Hafiz al-Qur'ān, May God forgive his sin.

(4) Copied by the one nearly [for God's favour], 'Ushmar, known as Hafiz al-Qur'ān.

(5) Copied by the one nearly [for God's favour], Yūsuf, known as Hafiz al-Qur'ān.

(6) Written by the one nearly of his Al-Maqna Lord, Muhammad Rehim.

(7) Copied by Mahmud known as Jalaf al-Dīn.
hand of God, the mercy upon him, in the name of the year [note: the Record Office of May it continue to be held.

Muhammad, son of Prophet, known as the son of Muhammad.

May God forgive his sins and those of his parents and whoever looks at this in the year one thousand one hundred and five..." [A.D. 695-4]. Copied by Muhammad the Amahale, with the help of God the Most Worthy King, from an original by 'Uthman Efendi.

Cat. 69
The servant of the People of the Chasak, Sayyid 'Aziz Mustafa, 1218 [A.D. 1801-2].

Cat. 70
The servant of the People of the Chasak, Sayyid 'Aziz Mustafa, 1214-5 [A.D. 1801-5].

Cat. 71
Written by 'Abdulrahman in the year one thousand [A.D. 1901-2].

Cat. 72
Written by 'Abdulrahman in the year one thousand [A.D. 1901-2].

Cat. 73
Written by the servant of the People of the Chasak, Sayyid 'Aziz Mustafa, 1214-5 [A.D. 1801-5].

Cat. 74
Written by the servant of the People of the Chasak, Sayyid 'Aziz Mustafa, 1214-5 [A.D. 1801-5].

Cat. 75
Written by 'Abdulrahman in the year one thousand [A.D. 1901-2].

Cat. 76
Written by the son of Yuni, May they both be forgiven. [A.D. 1801-7].

Cat. 77
[ Sayyid, 1217 [A.D. 1801-7].

Cat. 78
[ Sayyid, 1217 [A.D. 1801-7].

Cat. 79
[ Sayyid, 1217 [A.D. 1801-7].

Cat. 80
[ Sayyid, 1331 [A.D. 1814-5].

Cat. 91
Written by Muhammad, son of 'Abd al-Hamid Khan.

Cat. 92
Muhammad, son of 'Abd al-Hamid Khan.

Cat. 93
Written by 'Abd al-Majid, son of Muhammad Khan.
Cat. 94
Written by `Abd al-Majid, son of Mahmud Khan.

Cat. 95
Written by `Abd al-Aziz, son of Mahmud Khan.

Cat. 98
Written by Shavqi, 1923 [AD 1878-84].

Cat. 99
Written by the wall-watcher Sayyid Yusuf [ibn] Taqi al-Din, servant of His Excellency, the Minister of War, Khattar Muhammad Basha, and pupil of Mustafa Shalat (kutub al-Majd al-Qarni, 1230 [AD 848-9]).

Cat. 100
Written by the son of Fethi, May he be forgiven, 1923 [AD 1880-1].

Cat. 101
Written by the sound Sama, 1920 [AD 1875-6].

Cat. 102
Written by the sound, Khalil, son of Khudayr, May he be forgiven, 1925 [AD 1885-6].

Cat. 103
Muhammad Izzat, 1313 [AD 1895-6].

Cat. 104
Written by Shafiq, 1924 [AD 1886-4].

Cat. 105
Written by the son of Muhain Sayyid `Abdallah, honoured to be chief书记, expressing the true will of the Commander of the Faithful, the glorious Sultan, the victorious Sultan, `Ali al-Hasan Khan, May God praise him, be exalted and glorified until the end of time. 1303 [AD 1882-3].

Cat. 106
Copied by the one needed (for God's favour) al-Hafiz Hanan al-Raf`at al-Tarabusi, 1304 [AD 1883-4].

Cat. 107
Copied by the one needed (for God's favour) al-Shaykh al-Zay al-Rida, 1312 [AD 1891-2].

Cat. 108
Written by `Abd, 1312 [AD 1891-2].

Published by the present author, 1322 [AD 1895-6].

Cat. 110
Written by the present author, 1322 [AD 1895-6].

Cat. 111
Written by Hadi, 1323 [AD 1894-5].

Cat. 112
Copied by the one needed (for God's favour) Malak Muhammad Han.

Cat. 113
Copied by Malak Muhammad.

Cat. 114
Copied by Malak Muhammad Qasimi 1355 [AD 1899].

Cat. 115
Written according to the command of His Excellency, the noble Bahman Mirza, May his greatness be prolonged. Copied by Muhammad Husayn, 1330 [AD 1874-5].

Cat. 116
Written according to the command of his excellency, the noble Bahman Mirza, May his glory be prolonged. Copied by Muhammad Husayn, 1330 [AD 1874-5].

Cat. 117
He is [God]. The one needed (for God's favour), the poor wretch, Ghalib Riza, may he be forgiven. 1337 [AD 1879-80]. O'Ali Help!

Cat. 118
He is [God]. The one needed for God's favour, the poor wretched, Ghalib Riza, may he be forgiven. O'Ali Help! 1337 [AD 1879-80].

Cat. 119
The one needed (for God's favour), Ghalib Riza.

Cat. 120
The one needed (for God's favour), Ghalib Riza.

Cat. 121
He is [God]. The one needed (for God's favour), the poor wretched, Ghalib Riza, may he be forgiven in the year 1337 [AD 1879-80]. O'Ali Help!

Cat. 122
The one needed (for God's favour), Ghalib Riza, may he be forgiven. 1337 [AD 1879-80]. O'Ali Help!

Cat. 123
The one needed (for God's favour), Ghalib Riza, O'Ali Help!

Cat. 124
Muhammad `Ali in the year 1335 [AD 1878-9].
Cat. 129
Written in the diacritical points of the word 'al-futūh:"
Written by the warden of the week, the dust on the feet of the poor and wretched, Muhammad Nuri, known as 'the son of Salawat', one of the pupils of al-Shaykh al-Salhiyy Muhammad al-Hamdi, known as 'the son of Esaki', mufti of the Great Mosque of Sivas, May God forgive them and their parents and all believers...
[2282] [AD 1872–73].

Cat. 130
Khalil, a pupil of al-Siwali, in the year 1311 [AD 1893–94]

Cat. 131
Written by Siwali Nuri, 1341 [AD 1922–23].

Cat. 132
Written by Muhammad al-Hamdi.

Cat. 133
The one who (for God's sake) is a good and blessed student of Khair.

Cat. 134
The one who (for God's sake) is a good and blessed student of Khair, in the year 1372 [AD 1953–54].

Cat. 135
Nasir, the son of Khair.

Cat. 136
Nasir, the son of Khair, in the year 1321 [AD 1903–04].

Cat. 137
The one who (for God's sake) is a good and blessed student of Khair.

Cat. 138
The one who (for God's sake) is a good and blessed student of Khair, in the year 1388 [AD 1969–70].

Cat. 139
The work of Sulayman [1281] [AD 1863–64].

Cat. 140
Written by Sami, [1323] [AD 1905–06].

Cat. 141
Written by Raja, [out by] Rifki, 1323 [AD 1905–06].

Cat. 142
[ AD 1905–06].

Cat. 143
[ AD 1905–06].

Cat. 144
[ AD 1905–06].

Cat. 145
Written by Abu'l-Qasim, [AD 1918–19].

Cat. 146
Written by Abu'l-Qasim, [AD 1918–19].

Cat. 147
Written by Abu'l-Qasim, [AD 1918–19].

Cat. 148
The one who (for God's sake) is a good and blessed student of Khair, in the year 1364 [AD 1945–46].

Cat. 149
[ AD 1905–06].

Cat. 150
Written by the faithful slave, Muhammad Abu'l-Qasim ibn Khair.

Cat. 151
Written by the faithful slave, Muhammad Abu'l-Qasim ibn Khair.

Cat. 152
Association of Muslims in the year 1312 [AD 1894].

Cat. 153
Association of Muslims in the year 1312 [AD 1894].

Cat. 154
Association of Muslims in the year 1312 [AD 1894].

Cat. 155
Association of Muslims in the year 1312 [AD 1894].

Cat. 156
Association of Muslims in the year 1312 [AD 1894].

Cat. 157
Association of Muslims in the year 1312 [AD 1894].

Cat. 158
Association of Muslims in the year 1312 [AD 1894].

Cat. 159
Association of Muslims in the year 1312 [AD 1894].

Cat. 160
Lower left panel: Copied by the most noble slave, Ahmad al-Nayzi, in Istackan the Miday in the year 1111 [AD 1700–10].

Cat. 161
Copied by the most noble slave, Ahmad al-Nayzi, in Istackan the Miday in the year 1111 [AD 1700–10].

Cat. 162
Copied by the defile slave, Muhammad Qasim al-Sawar, [1271] [AD 1852–53], from an original by the kindly master Ahmad al-Nayzi.

Cat. 163
Written by the slave Ahmad al-Nayzi in [1119] [AD 1707–8], copied by 'Ali 'Abbas al-Arsanjani al-Shirazi in [1287] [AD 1868–69].

Cat. 164
I copied [this] from the band of my teacher, who was Muhammad Dehvan al-Qasim, May God ease his resting place.

Cat. 165
Copied by the faithful slave, Abu'l-Qasim, in haste in [1225] [AD 1813–14].

Cat. 166
Written by the faithful slave, the son of Muhammad, 'Ali, Muhammad Shafi, a stranger, of Tabrizi birth and home.

Cat. 167
Abu al-Qasim is copied in haste in [1225] [AD 1813–14].

Cat. 168
Abu al-Qasim al-Shirazi [copied it] in haste in [1225] [AD 1813–14].

Cat. 169
Written by the most noble slave, Ahmad. I am... the son of Muhammad, 'Ali, Muhammad Shafi al-Tebirzi al-Shahrabi, the first day of the first tenth of the second month of the fourth year of the fourth tenth of the third hundred of the second thousand [6 December 1813].
Cat. 167
Bottom right.
Copied by the slave 'Abd al-Samad, son of 'Abd al-Halim ....

Cat. 168
The copyist is the son of Muhammad Molkin al-Khuwarizmi, 'Abd al-Ali, during Rabi' in the hijab year 1231 (March 824).

Cat. 169
Written by the sited slave, the son of Muhammad Husain, Ahmad Shamsi, for the beloved, sincerer [friend] Aqa Mohammad Sadig 1236 (983) 9.

Cat. 170
Copied in the 'Abode of the Caliphate', Tehran, by the meanest among the sons of the learned, Zayn al-Abdin al-Mahalli, ... Friday 11 Ramadan one thousand two hundred and ninety-two (14 October 175).

Cat. 171
Written by the meanest deliqueant slave, Aqa Jan Parn, called 'Izhabest, in the year 1294 (987).

Cat. 172
Written by the meanest slave, Muhammad al-Husayni in the year 1397 (1283).

Cat. 173
Written by the meanest slave, Muhammad Mahdi, son of Muhammad Baqir al-Husayni 1327 (986).

Cat. 174
Copied by the meanest, sincere slave, Abu'l-Husayn al-Musawi, 145 (846).

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