LETTERS IN GOLD
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OTTOMAN CALLIGRAPHY FROM THE SAKIP SABANCI COLLECTION, ISTANBUL

M. UĞUR DERMAN

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK
Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York

The exhibition is made possible by AKBANCI HOLDING / AKBANK
Istanbul, Turkey.

The exhibition was organized by The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.


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Published by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

John P. O'Neill, Editor in Chief
Jane Bobko, Editor
Patrick Seymour, Designer
Gwen Boginsky, Production Manager

The Turkish text was translated by Mohamed Zakariya, with assistance from Dr. Esin Ati, Elif Gökgöz, İbrahim Kalm, Heath Lowry, and Günsen Tanırkör.

Some of the text in this catalogue previously appeared, in somewhat different form, in M. Uğur Derman's essay "Calligraphy, translated by Priscilla Mary lson, in The Sabancı Collection" (Istanbul, 1995). Ison's translation served as a helpful source for this translation.

Photography by Bruce White

Kit's and hıleye drawings based on originals by Erçu Pekin; tugra drawing from original in the Derman Collection, Istanbul.

Printed on 155 gsm Leykam Magnomatt
Color separations by Mas Mathaçılık AŞ, Istanbul
Printed and bound by Mas Mathaçılık AŞ, Istanbul

Jacket/Cover illustration: Tugra from berat of Murad III, 983/1575. Sakıp Sabancı Collection, Istanbul (cat. no. 65, detail)

Frontispiece: Çerçuí Ali Efendi (d. 1520/1902), Levha, 1297/1880. Sakıp Sabancı Collection, Istanbul (cat. no. 44, detail)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Derman, M. Uğur.
Letters in gold: Ottoman calligraphy from the Sakıp Sabancı collection, Istanbul / M. Uğur Derman.

p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-8109-6528-7 (Abrams)

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 97-74597

98-21945
CIP
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Collector’s Foreword

I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to exhibit a selection of Ottoman calligraphy from the Sakıp Sabancı Collection at such prestigious, world-renowned institutions as The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The Sakıp Sabancı Collection of Ottoman Calligraphy includes works dating from the fifteenth through the mid-twentieth century and is the largest such private collection in Turkey. It is particularly satisfying for me to be able to share with an American audience this remarkable art that is so emblematic of my own national heritage, but which is still little known in the West.

Among the many glorious arts of the Ottoman period, pride of place was given to calligraphy, which was regarded as the most prestigious form of art. The Ottoman sultans, some of whom were themselves accomplished in the art of writing, supported calligraphers in much the same way as princes and wealthy patrons in the West sponsored painters. As did Western painters through the nineteenth century, Turkish calligraphers shaped their art through study and emulation of the works of earlier masters. Apart from the obvious beauty of Ottoman calligraphy, what most appeals to me is the important relationship between master and apprentice, and the infinite capacity of this art to renew itself from one generation to the next. This notion of respect for and veneration of earlier generations has special resonance for me.

My father, Hacı Ömer Sabancı, was born in the village of Akçaakaya in central Anatolia—the son of a poor family of farmers. He did not have the opportunity to go to school; he did not learn to read and write. At the age of twenty, he left home in search of work, walking 125 miles to the city of Adana, where he began working as a laborer in the cotton fields. He took advantage of the opportunities offered to him and finally became the owner of a cotton yarn and textile factory. In time, his business grew, and he moved to Istanbul. Although Istanbul’s cosmopolitan environment gave my father a healthy appetite for art and culture and he began to collect antiques, he never forgot his roots.
My father instilled in his children a pride in our heritage; we are as closely linked to our past as we are to one another. He also inculcated in us a deep appreciation of education and a love of art.

As part of the modernization movement initiated by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, the Latin alphabet was introduced in 1928 and the Arabic alphabet was virtually abandoned. I belong to the generation that learned to read and write modern Turkish. Although I do not know the Arabic alphabet, Ottoman calligraphy has become my main focus as a collector. Initially, I was attracted by the beauty and majesty of this art form; later on, I came to understand the importance of protecting and preserving Ottoman calligraphy so that it might be appreciated by a new generation in Turkey and elsewhere.

I am enormously pleased to offer the first exhibition in the New World dedicated exclusively to Ottoman calligraphy and to introduce to an American audience the rich culture exemplified by these works of art.

Sakıp Sabancı
Directors’ Foreword

The exhibition “Letters in Gold: Ottoman Calligraphy from the Sakıp Sabancı Collection, Istanbul” brings to The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art seventy-one rare and beautiful calligraphies and illuminated manuscripts from the magnificent collection assembled by the prominent Turkish businessman and philanthropist Sakıp Sabancı. It is thanks to his generosity and enlightened initiative that these treasures are being shared for the first time with an international public. These remarkable pieces are usually housed in his private residence overlooking the Bosphorus.

Almost every major Ottoman calligrapher working in the fifteenth to the early twentieth century is represented in the Sabancı Collection by important examples of calligraphy. The manuscripts include exquisitely illuminated Qur’ans and prayer handbooks, elegant albums or murakkaalar composed of calligraphic exercises and often decorated with sumptuous marbled paper called ebrû, and spectacular, large-scale lettered compositions, called levhalar, which were framed and hung in mosques and homes. In addition, the exhibition displays eleven royal edicts, beautifully crafted scrolls topped by the tuğra, a sultan’s imperial monogram. Fine, rich gold letters and delicate blue-and-gold illuminations demonstrate how the written word can be transformed into a work of art.

Sakıp Sabancı is justifiably proud of his Anatolian origins and of his father’s modest beginnings in Adana, Turkey. He has devoted some of the profits of his company—now one of Turkey’s largest industrial groups—to toward building numerous schools and hospitals throughout the country.

Because Mr. Sabancı considers the Ottoman Empire’s aesthetic traditions important and feels it imperative that they be preserved, he has assembled his extraordinary collection with a view toward sharing it with as large a public as possible. Toward that end The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art are privileged to show to their visitors these high exemplars of Ottoman civilization.

Throughout the planning and realization of this exhibition, the Metropolitan Museum enjoyed the support of the government of the Republic of Turkey, and we are especially grateful to the Minister of
Foreign Affairs, İsmail Cem; the Minister of Culture, Mustafa Istemihan Talay; Tekin Aybaş, Undersecretary, Ministry of Culture; and the Turkish Ambassador to the United States, Nuzhet Kandemir, for their indispensable cooperation.

The primary mover, aside from Mr. Sabancı, in bringing these magnificent treasures to the American museum-going public is MAhrukh Tarapor, Associate Director for Exhibitions, at the Metropolitan Museum. Curatorial guidance and expertise for the exhibition and catalogue were provided by Linda Komaroff, Associate Curator of Islamic Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and at the Metropolitan by Stefano Carboni, Associate Curator, Department of Islamic Art. Staff members from both institutions were privileged in Istanbul to work closely with Mr. Sabancı's knowledgeable representatives, Ali Haydar Taşlı, private executive officer; Arzu Çekirge Paksoy, advertising and public relations manager; and Orhan Kural, Akbank representative. We also extend special thanks to Raffi Portakal for his guidance, hospitality, and ready assistance at all times, and to Hülya Karadeniz who efficiently and effectively coordinated various aspects of the exhibition with both our institutions.

The richly illustrated catalogue accompanying the exhibition is published by The Metropolitan Museum of Art under the direction of John P. O'Neill, Editor in Chief and General Manager of Publications, in close collaboration with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, especially Linda Komaroff. Its authoritative text was written by the foremost expert on the subject, M. Uğur Derman, a professor at Mimar Sinan University, Istanbul, and a trained calligrapher.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art are honored to be the only American venues for this distinguished collection, and we offer sincere thanks to Sâkıp Sabancı and Sabancı Holding/Akbank Istanbul for making the exhibition and catalogue possible.

Philippe de Montebello
Director
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Graham W. J. Beal
Director
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Acknowledgments

Sakip Sabancı has managed to bridge the past and the future with this exhibition of magnificent works of art from his collection—testaments to a great cultural heritage. Through the initiative of Mahrukh Tarapor of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, these works are being exhibited to the American public for the first time, and the stage has been set for a renewed appreciation of Ottoman arts. This book is not just a catalogue; it has become a handbook of Turkish calligraphy thanks to the guidance and encouragement of Hülya Karadeniz in Istanbul and Linda Komaroff of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

My primary obligation is to acknowledge my debt to Necmeddin Okyay (1885–1976), Mähir İz (1895–1974), Dr. Süheyl Ünver (1898–1986), Mâcid Ayral (1891–1961), Mustafa Halim Özyazıcı (1898–1964), and Nihad M. Çetin (1924–1991). These friends and mentors were crucial figures in my education in the art of calligraphy and other arts of the book.

The computer specialists Ersu Pekin and Nejla Somali worked closely with me. I received generous advice from Dr. Çiçek Derman on the illumination and decorative aspects of the works in the catalogue, and from Professor Mehmed İpşirli of the University of Istanbul on the historical and technical aspects of the beratlar, fermanlar, and mesajlar. Dr. Halil Sahilioğlu, professor emeritus at the University of Istanbul, helped me calculate the value today, in American dollars, of Ottoman currency.

My old American friend Mohamed Zakariya, a knowledgeable calligrapher himself, translated my text into English accurately and on a tight schedule; Jane Bobko carefully edited the result. Professor Zikri Altun of Marmara University, Istanbul, assisted with the translation of some fine points in the text. John P. O’Neill and his staff at the Metropolitan Museum; Bruce White, who photographed the works with such artistry; and Mas Mathaçılık A.Ş., Istanbul, also contributed their expertise to this undertaking.

Here I offer my deepest thanks to all those who shared in making Letters in Gold a reality.

And if you, the reader, should admire the contents of this book, you, too, are included in my thanks.

M. Uğur Derman
Note to the Reader

The Prophet Muhammad (A.D. ca. 570–632) fled from Mecca, and from persecution by the city’s pagan establishment, to Medina to preach his religion in the year A.D. 622. Muslims take the date of this flight (*hijra*) as the beginning of their calendar. The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar consisting of twelve months, each 29.5 days long, for a total of 354 days. Thus the Islamic year is eleven days shorter than the solar year, which is the basis for the Western calendar. As a result, for every 33 Western years, there are 34 Islamic years; for every 100 solar years, there are 103 lunar ones. Islamic calligraphers used the lunar *hijra* calendar to date their works.

In this text, dates are given Western-style. The dates of calligraphic works and of calligraphers’ lives, however, are given according to both the lunar and the solar calendars, with the *hijra* date supplied first.

This book deals with an Ottoman subject. At the request of the author, the names of the chapters of the Qur’an, and all other Qur’anic terminology, are given in Turkish transliteration. Thus the Qur’anic invocation of Allah, commonly transliterated as the *basmala*, is given here as the *besmele*. All technical terms, even those of Arabic origin, are given their Turkish spellings. These terms, which include the names of scripts, represent original, unique, and distinct categories of artistic style and content that have no specific analogues in English. Each term is defined or described at its first mention in the text. Turkish plurals, most of which are formed by the addition of *-ler* or *-lar*, are also employed.

Turkish orthography—in 1928, the Arabic alphabet that had been used to write Turkish was replaced by a modified version of the Latin one—includes a number of letters and symbols that will be unfamiliar to the general reader. Here is a list, along with pronunciation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td><em>j</em>, as in jar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ç</td>
<td><em>ch</em>, as in cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ğ</td>
<td>usually a silent letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ğ</td>
<td><em>a</em>, as in cereal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td><em>i</em>, as in pit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td><em>s</em>, as in pleasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ö</td>
<td>the German ö</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ş</td>
<td><em>sh</em>, as in ship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ü</td>
<td>the German ü</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A circumflex, or *sapka* (hat), placed over a vowel lengthens it.
During Ottoman times, Muslim children were usually given a single name at birth. To distinguish themselves further, they would often take on names that identified their fathers or referred to their occupation or place of origin. A young man could take on a künye, or patronymic, using the Persian suffix -zade (son of), as in Yesârîzade, or the Arabic word for “son,” ibn or bin, as in İbni’s Şeyh or Hasan bin Mustafa.

A place name could also be added to a person’s name, using either the Arabic ending -i or the Turkish ending -lî (or -lı). Thus, Mustafa Kütâhi and Kütahyalı Mustafa both describe Mustafa of Kütahya. A word signifying a person’s occupation, rank, or title could also be applied as a name. For example, the calligrapher Mustafa Râkim, named Mustafa at birth, acquired the appellation Râkim, which means “Writer” or “Calligrapher,” when he became an accomplished artist. Other examples include Kâdiasker (Supreme Judge) Mustafa İzzet Efendi, Çömez (Apprentice) Mustafa Efendi, and Şeyh (Sheikh) Hamdullah. Nicknames were also possible, as in Deli (Crazy) Osman.

Honorifics such as Efendi (Master, Gentleman) or Hanım (Lady) were used by members of literate or clerical society. A person who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca was called Hacı (Pilgrim). The title Bey (Sir, Mister) has a less religious connotation and was more closely associated with civil authorities.

Over the course of their lives, people might acquire more than one such appellation. Repeating the entire multipart name can be unwieldy and repetitious, and for that reason, the names can be shortened in various ways. Yesârî Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, for example, can properly be referred to as Yesârî Mehmed Efendi, Yesârî Efendi, Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, or Es'ad Efendi—often within the same paragraph. This usage is reflected in this book for the sake of simplicity and readability, and as an example of Turkish style.

The works in this catalogue were measured in centimeters. Dimensions are given in centimeters followed by inches, which have been rounded off to the nearest eighth of an inch. Height precedes width. Folios are identified as r (recto) or v (verso). In Ottoman books, the recto is the left-hand page; the verso is the right-hand page.
LETTERS IN GOLD
Figure 1. Mustafa Halim Ozyazici
(1915/1898–1984/1964), Besmele,
1379/1959. Ink on paper, calligraphy in black ink,
8.8 x 30.4 cm (3½ x 11¾ in.).
Sakıp Sabancı Collection,
İstanbul (238)
The Art of Turkish Calligraphy

Art is not the monopoly of any society. Only when a society stamps its character on an art can the art be claimed, and recognized, as an expression of that society's identity.

The Ottoman Turks had such an art: calligraphy. This art was not Turkish in origin. But having adopted it with religious fervor and inspiration, the Ottomans created marvels. Turkish calligraphy is a unique artistic creation.

When we speak of "Turkish calligraphy," we refer to writing of aesthetic value based on the letters of the Arabic alphabet, which the Turks had adopted after their conversion to Islam. The process by which the Arabic alphabet acquired its aesthetic characteristics was slow at first, but from the mid-eighth century that process began to accelerate. By the time the Turks joined the Islamic world in the tenth century, calligraphy was already an important art form. It is necessary, therefore, to review briefly the structure of the original Arabic alphabet and its development during the early centuries of Islam.

FROM ALPHABET TO ART

"Calligraphy is a spiritual geometry produced by a material instrument." This succinct aesthetic dictum, found in early Islamic sources, has guided the development of calligraphy.

Before the advent of Islam, the North Arabian tribe called the Nabataeans lived in what is today Jordan and Syria. Their main cities were Hjir, Petra, and Bostra, and their writing system was called nabati. The Arabic alphabet originated with nabati, which itself originated with Phoenician. In its early form, the Arabic script consisted only of rudimentary shapes, giving no indication of its future potential as a powerful artistic medium. With the emergence of Islam, however, and especially after the hijra—that is, Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina in 622 to escape persecution and preach the new religion—Arabic writing was ennobled, becoming Islam's primary means of visual expression.

Calligraphy had its origins in religion, as Muslims searched for the
most suitable way to make the sacred book of Islam, the Qur’an, a volume or codex (mushaf) whose physical beauty would reflect its spiritual beauty. In the Arabic writing system, most letters undergo a change of form according to their position at the beginning, middle, or end of a word, or when they stand alone. As this basic writing system was transformed into an art, the letters acquired highly supple shapes. A rich visual effect was achieved by writing the letters in strategic relationship to one another; the top sheet in figure 2 demonstrates many combinations, in nineteenth-century Ottoman sülüs, of the letter bâ (B) with the letter mim (M). It was possible to write the same word or phrase in many ways, opening the door to an endless search for new styles and novel approaches. The letters varied to an astonishing degree, depending on which of various scripts was used and by which calligrapher.
The Arabic alphabet was adopted, primarily as a token of religious allegiance, by virtually all of the peoples who converted to Islam. Within a few centuries after the *hijra*, the alphabet had become the shared property of the entire Muslim world. "Arabic calligraphy," a term appropriate to the early period when Islam was limited to the Arab lands, grew over time into what more accurately might be described as "Islamic calligraphy."

The number of people literate in Arabic multiplied rapidly, and in time the script was perfected into a vehicle suitable for recording the Qur'an—and hence the Arabic language itself, in which the sacred book was revealed—with precision. Vowel signs known as *hareke* were invented to accompany the all-consonantal alphabet (three of the consonants, however, can double as vowels). Letters identical in form but different in sound were distinguished by variously placed dots and groups of dots. As time passed, the use of these diacritics to differentiate letters became universal. Both the diacritics and the vowel signs, as well as the symbol indicating undotted letters (*huruf-i mühmele*), acquired decorative forms, which played a major role in the development of writing as an art. Meanwhile, the frequently used Arabic definite article, consisting of the letters *alif* and *lām* (*al*), became an aesthetic balancing element.

In the pre-Islamic era, depending on the cultural center at the time, Arabic writing was known variously as *anbāri*, *hīrī*, and *mekki* (Meccan). After the *hijra*, it was known as *medeni* (Medinan). Artistic considerations were not a concern for the original Qur'an copyists. The first Islamic text compiled in book form, the Qur'an was initially written in the *mekki*/*medeni* script, in black or dark brown ink on animal-skin parchment, without vowel signs or diacritics. In time, this early writing evolved into two forms. One was a sharply angled form reserved for the Qur'an and important correspondence; this form became known as *küf* (Kufic), after the city of Kufa, in Iraq, where it was most often used.

The other form, which was more rounded and flexible and could be written more quickly, was used for day-to-day purposes. Under the Ummayad caliphate (661–750), this form of writing spread and evolved rapidly in Damascus, the capital of the Arab empire. Following the development, in the eighth century, of pens whose nibs were cut to different widths, this style of writing gave rise to new scripts, named for the pens with which they were written. Among the earliest of these scripts were *cellīl*, reserved for large-scale lettering, and *tūmār* (a very large script, and pen, for use on scrolls), which was the standard in official correspondence. Some of the new scripts were based on *tūmār* (Turkish *tomar*) and written with pens whose nibs were in specific proportion to the *tūmār* pen. Pens with nibs two-thirds as wide as the nib of the *tūmār* pen were known as *siblyeeyn* (two-thirds), and those with nibs one-third as wide were known as *silyis* (one-third). As the pens were scaled down, the scripts took on specific features of their
own. Other new scripts that emerged, only to fall later into disuse, included riyaśi, kalemi‘n-nusf, hafti‘n-nusf, and hafti‘s-sūlūs.

At the same time, the word kalem, or pen, which referred to the writing instrument, came to be used for the writing itself. For example, the script kalemi‘n-nusf literally means “half-size pen,” because the nib employed is half as wide as the tūmār nib. The term hat, or calligraphy, was used for scripts such as kisāṣ and muṣmerat, which were devised for special uses and did not involve the proportional scaling down of the pen.

Under the ‘Abbāsid caliphate (750–1258), learning and the arts flourished, leading to a swelling demand for books in Baghdad, the main capital, and in other major cities. To meet this demand, the number of copyists and stationers, called verrāklar, also rose; the script they used for copying was variously known as verrāki, muhakkak (no relation to the modern muhakkak), neshī, and irāki.

From the end of the eighth century, the practice of writing letters in accordance with specific proportions and symmetries became known as asīl hat, or fundamental calligraphy, and mevznān hat, or balanced calligraphy. The outstanding calligrapher of this period was Ibn Muqla (d. 328/940), who composed rules for proportioning and ordering writing. Writing done according to these principles was called mensūb hattī, or proportioned writing.

While these developments were taking place, the kūfī script was flourishing, especially for copying Qur’ans. Within kūfī there were regional variations, especially in Andalusia and North Africa, where the script took on a more rounded form called magribī. In Persia and the East, meanwhile, a kūfī variant called meşrīk kūfisi (Eastern kūfī) was used until it was superseded by the aklām-i sitte, or six scripts, discussed below. The large-scale form of kūfī known as irī kūfī, which is mainly used on monuments, was primarily decorative.

The form of mensūb hattī known as verrāki was generally reserved for copying books and was therefore referred to as neshī, from the verb istīnsāb, to copy. This script was the prototype for the muhakkak, reyhanī, and nesih scripts that emerged in the eleventh century. The finest calligrapher of this period, Ibn al-Bawwāb (d. 413/1024), amended the rules promulgated by Ibn Muqla, establishing a method that was widely used until the mid-thirteenth century. The calligrapher Ibn al-Khāzin (d. 518/1124) contributed to the development of the tevki‘ and rikā‘ scripts. Finally, Yaqūt al-Musta‘simī (or Yaqūt; d. 698/1298), working in Baghdad, further developed the method elaborated by Ibn al-Bawwāb and wrote the finest thirteenth-century examples of sūlūs, nesih, muhakkak, reyhanī, tevki‘, and rikā‘, which are together known as the aklām-i sitte, or six scripts. The idea of cutting the nib of the reed pen at an angle instead of straight across was his, and it was an innovation that brought a great deal of elegance to calligraphy. Once the six scripts, with all their rules, had taken their place in the art of calligraphy, other scripts were abandoned. Today no trace remains of
these lost scripts except their names, among them, *sicillât, dibâc, zênbûr, mufattah, harems, lûtûh, muallak, and mûrsel.*

After Yaqût’s death, the master scribes who had studied under him carried his method of writing the six scripts from Baghdad to Anatolia, Egypt, Syria, Iran, and Transoxiana in Central Asia, where the art continued to attract interest. New generations of calligraphers in these lands dedicated themselves to Yaqût’s method. But as time passed, that method lost its originality. It remained for the Ottoman Turks to rescue the six scripts and develop them to their fullest, a story we shall continue after a brief look at the tools and materials used in the art of calligraphy.

**TOOLS AND MATERIALS**

The primary requisites for the tools employed in calligraphy are soundness and usability. But in the Ottoman period, artisans lavished more care and attention on these tools than on the tools of other trades, creating objects of great beauty. Many are of museum quality.

Used as both musical instrument (the *ney*, or flute) and pen, the reed evokes the mystical atmosphere of the Oriental Islamic world. Yellowish white reeds are harvested from the marshy banks of lakes and rivers in warm regions. They are not usable as pens in their natural state but first must be seasoned by burial (traditionally, for a period of four years) in horse manure, which maintains a constant moist warmth. During burial, the reeds harden and change color, becoming
reddish brown, light or dark brown, or even black, depending on the type of reed (fig. 3).

When the reed is seasoned, the end is cut into an angled nib, which must be recut regularly as it wears. Even the slightest deviation in the width of the nib after recutting noticeably alters the appearance of the writing. This is considered a serious artistic flaw, especially in the case of nesih and other fine scripts. Therefore, in the case of long texts, such as the Qur’an, calligraphers use pens made from the hard, straight, slender thorn of a palm tree native to Indonesia and Malaysia. (Ottoman calligraphers discovered these pens in the early nineteenth century among Javanese Muslims who carried them on pilgrimages to Mecca.) These pens, which are called cava kalemleri, are extremely durable and require little recutting. For ease of use, the cava kalemi is affixed to a normal reed pen, which serves as a handle (fig. 3).

As the thickness of the writing increases, correspondingly thicker reeds are required. These are called kargı kalemler, or spear pens (fig. 3). Hard bamboo may be used. Even these pens, however, cannot accommodate some of the celli (large) scripts; in such cases, calligraphers use pens carved from wood, called ağacı kalemler or tahta kalemler (wooden pens; fig. 3). Extremely large celli inscriptions cannot be written directly by hand at all, as a pen big enough to produce the letters would be too heavy to hold. Such inscriptions are written first on a smaller scale and then enlarged by means of squaring.

To make the nib, the reed is laid on the palm of the left hand (if the calligrapher is right-handed), with the tip extending toward the wrist. The tip is cut away with a penknife called the kalemturaş, held at a slant. The blade, known as the tığ, is mounted in a handle that is often
made of valuable materials, such as gold-inlaid steel, enameled gold, ivory, coral, mother-of-pearl, or ebony. The bolster that connects the blade to the handle is known as the parazvana. The penknife is commonly between four and eight inches in length. The master knife maker generally embosses his name on the blade; the makers' stamps are visible on the blades of the penknives in figure 4.

The pen is cut until the cavity of the hollow reed appears almond-shaped. The projecting tip that results is called the kalem dili (pen's tongue). The edges of the tongue are cut to obtain a nib of the desired width. The nib is then split to a depth of one-half to one and one-half inches. It is essential that the split (çatlak) be exactly parallel to the pen shaft. The opening thus formed becomes a reservoir that contains a small store of ink, which flows down to the nib as the calligrapher writes.

The nib is cut against the cutting surface of the makta, a small, flat piece of wood, ivory, tortoiseshell, or mother-of-pearl. These materials
are hard enough to cut against but will not damage the edge of the penknife. (Figure 4 shows an engraved makta, made of silver and black polyester resin, with an inlaid ivory cutting pad, by the contemporary artist Salih Balakbabalar [b. 1950].) At one end of the makta is a small grooved protrusion. In cutting or recutting the nib, the calligrapher rests the pen in this groove, holds the handle of the pen securely, and brings the sharp blade of the penknife down to snip off the end of the nib. In cutting the catlak, the calligrapher holds the knife parallel to the pen and presses down against it.

The angled nib results in writing that slants toward the calligrapher, who holds the pen so that the edge of the nib rests fully on the paper. Moving the pen from top to bottom, the calligrapher produces a fine perpendicular line. Moving the pen from right to left results in a thick line. Sometimes the calligrapher alters the angle of the pen to the work, to achieve a subtle effect. The proper size of the letters in each script is measured in dots, and the size of the dot depends on the width of the nib. Thus the pen is the most vital element in the aesthetic quality of calligraphy.
Pens are sometimes kept in a case containing an inkwell at one end, known as a divit (fig. 5), and sometimes in cylindrical or rectangular boxes called kalemdanlar, which may be plain or decorated. The cylindrical kalemdan is also called a kubur (fig. 7).

In the past, paper was not ready to be used as soon as it was procured from the factory. Because this raw paper was normally white and tired the eyes, it was first dyed. Then it was sized with a substance called āhār, and finally burnished with a tool called a čakmak mühre to smooth the surface and stabilize the āhār coating. This process, still used by calligraphers today, results in a paper that is as glossy and smooth as though it had been calendered between rollers.

Vegetable dyes are generally used to color the paper. The dye material is boiled in water, which is then poured into a trough. The paper is soaked in the dye until it reaches the desired color, then set aside to dry. A cream or tan color produced from tea is the most popular. Among the other substances used to dye papers, and the colors they produce, are pomegranate skins and the green outer skins of walnuts (brown); seeds of cehri, or dyer’s buckthorn (yellow); red logwood (red); purple logwood (purple); the dark brown soot formed in the chimney of a confectioner’s stove during the production of caramel (yellowish white); and onion skins (reddish). If desired, the margins of the paper can be dyed a different color from the writing area. A paper prepared this way is called akkāse (fig. 15).

After dying, according to the ancient rules, a coating of āhār size is applied over the paper surface to prevent the soot-based ink from penetrating the fibers of the paper. Because the ink remains on the surface, imperfections in the writing, such as the ragged edges that are sometimes produced on letters during the pen stroke, may be removed by wiping the area with a bit of cotton, licking the surface, or scraping it with a special knife called the tashih kalemtırași (correction knife; fig. 4). Papers prepared with āhār also improve with age. The most common size is egg whites mixed with alum and applied with a sponge. Starch or flour boiled with water into a thin paste can also be used. If the raw paper is not burnished within a week after being sized, the size will crack during the burnishing process, and the paper will be ruined.

The paper is burnished with the čakmak mühre (fig. 4), a wooden tool with handles on either end and a protruding piece of polished flint in the center. The paper is laid on a large, smooth panel of wood. To ensure that the mühre glides evenly over the surface of the paper, the paper is rubbed first with a piece of woolen fabric that has itself been rubbed over a bar of soap. Then, holding the mühre by its two handles, stone down, the calligrapher exerts pressure on the stone and moves it forward and backward over the paper, which is free to move on the wooden panel. Soon the paper begins to acquire a bright sheen. The paper is then stored for at least a year, until it is ready for use. Only when the paper has been sized, burnished, and aged will the pen glide
easily over it. And only then is it possible to correct errors by wiping or scraping. (Official documents of the Ottoman Empire, however, were written on burnished but unsized paper—which absorbed ink—so as to prevent forgery or alteration.)

To write on sized paper, it is necessary to wipe the paper lightly first with a piece of woolen fabric dusted with chalk. The chalk removes the slippery finish created by the soap that was used when the paper was burnished. It also removes any trace of oil transferred to the paper by handling, as ink will not take on an oily surface.

The palette in calligraphy is generally black lines, produced with lampblack ink, on a light background (see fig. 1). The soot that is the principal ingredient of lampblack ink (is mürekkebi) is obtained by burning such substances as linseed oil, beeswax, naphtha, or kerosene. Gum arabic, the other ingredient, serves to bind the carbon particles to the paper. From the many formulas for producing this ink that have been preserved, it is clear that the process has changed over time. The final, most-developed formula calls for soot, dissolved gum arabic, and distilled water, which are mixed and ground together for a long time. This ink never fades.

In the case of artistic calligraphy, the ink was left to dry naturally.
But for official correspondence, a fine, colored sand called *rh* or *rik* was sprinkled over the writing (fig. 7). Literate people carried lampblack ink with them wherever they went, in portable inkwells.

In Ottoman calligraphy, the most commonly used of the many different colored inks were yellow, or *zırmık*, made of orpiment (a compound of sulfur and arsenic); red, or *lâl*; white, or *üstübec*, made of white lead; and gold, or *zer*.

To make yellow ink—according to Ottoman tradition—the natural pigment called orpiment was combined with sodium, then vigorously ground with gum arabic and mixed with water. (*Altınbaş zırmığı*, or realgar, was sometimes used instead of orpiment, producing a more orange yellow.) Ruby red ink required mixing a substance called *lotur*, which has not been identified, with soapwort, alum, and water and then boiling them. Pulverized cochineal was added to this liquid, which was boiled again, yielding an extremely attractive red color. White ink was made using the same method as for yellow ink, substituting white lead for the orpiment. This white ink was primarily used for writing the *sûre*, or chapter, headings in illuminated Qur’ans. Gold ink was made by pulverizing high-karat gold leaf (fig. 8) into a fine powder in a thick solution of gum arabic or honey in a porcelain dish. Once this laborious task was accomplished, the substance was rinsed in water to remove the gum or honey, and the gold strained into another dish, leaving the finest gold dust. Gelatin dissolved in water was added (fig. 8). The gold ink was applied to the nib of the pen with a special brush as needed. This was the basis of the *zer-endlud*, or gold-painted, method.

In an age when all writing was done with reed pens and lampblack ink, the inkwell, or *hokka*, was a part of every ceramic writing set, wooden writing casket, and portable pen case. Inkwells could be ceramic or glass, but more frequently they were made of metal, such as brass, copper, or silver (figs. 6–7). The ink was not poured directly into these inkwells. Rather, a small wad of raw-silk fiber called *lika* (fig. 7) was inserted into the inkwell and the ink poured over it. The *lika* absorbed the ink like a sponge, ensuring that the pen would take up just the right amount of ink. The *lika* also ensured that the ink would not spill should the inkwell be overturned.

How letters and words are positioned, how they are arranged in relation to a straight line, and how far apart the lines are spaced are all dictated by calligraphic rules. To aid in his writing, the calligrapher created guidelines on the paper using a simple tool called a *mistar*—a piece of cardboard with strands of thread stretched taut across it at regular intervals (fig. 9).

To make the *mistar*, the calligrapher first calculated the proper spacing of lines on the manuscript page, according to the size of the measuring dot produced by the reed pen he was to use. He then drew the lines on a piece of cardboard the same size as the page, and, using a needle and a single strand of fine silk thread, made holes at the end
of each line and drew the silk through the hole at one end and across the cardboard to the hole at the other. The thread was also used to create guidelines indicating right and left margins. To use the mustar, the calligrapher placed the prepared paper on the thread side of the cardboard and traced the threads with his finger, pressing hard enough to leave subtle impressions of the lines.

In Ottoman times, calligraphers did not sit on chairs and write at tables. They sat on sofas or cushions with their right knee raised and with the paper resting against the knee, a position that kept the paper perpendicular to the calligrapher’s line of sight. To support the paper against the knee, the calligrapher used an altlık, a flexible pad of rough paper approximately eight inches by ten inches in size. Unlike a
hard surface, a flexible pad allowed for movements of the hand. A special, differently shaped altıık was employed for writing ta’lîk script (fig. 10).

Ottoman scissors are handsome implements with long blades, designed for cutting sheets of paper evenly from larger sheets. Some pairs of scissors were produced with their owner’s name in openwork on the handles (fig. 4). It is a great pleasure to use such a tool. Indeed, calligraphers relied on the high quality of all their tools and materials to produce the finest work.

THE EARLY TURKISH CONTRIBUTION TO CALLIGRAPHY

The Turks converted to Islam and adopted the Arabic alphabet by the tenth century, a century before the Turkish migrations into Anatolia. No artworks that would demonstrate an interest in calligraphy at this early date have survived. The earliest examples of the Turks’ use of Arabic writing date from the Anatolian Seljuk period (1092–1308). During this time, the küführt script was largely abandoned in favor of the “six scripts.” Küführt was reserved for book headings and monuments, where foliated or interlaced versions of it are found. In its architectural application, a geometrical version called satrançlı (chessboard) or murabba’lı (squared) küführt was used; some sources call these scripts mā’kūṣ or bennāt (architectural). During the Beylik period (thirteenth to fourteenth century), when independent Turkish principalities succeeded the Seljuks, and from the beginning of the Ottoman Empire until the conquest of Constantinople (1299–1453), calligraphy in Anatolia appears to have been a continuation of the ‘Abbasi school. The calligrapher Şeyh Hamdullah (833/1429–926/1520; see cat. nos. 1–2) marks the beginning of the Ottoman predominance in calligraphy. Thereafter, the art followed a steady course of development into the twentieth century.

Before discussing the great masters who contributed to the evolution of the art, let us look at the scripts used in Ottoman calligraphy.

The six scripts can be divided into three groups, each consisting of two natural partners: sülüs and nesih; muhakkak and reyhâni; and tevki’ and rikā’. The first partner in each group (sülüs, muhakkak, and tevki’) is written with a pen whose nib is approximately 2 millimeters (⅛ inch) in width. The second partner (nesih, reyhâni, and rikā’) is written with a pen whose nib is approximately 1 millimeter (⅛ inch) in width. Muhakkak and tevki’ are larger-scale versions of reyhâni and rikā’, respectively. Sülüs and nesih, however, do not fit this scheme, diverging substantially in form as well as in style. The very fine version of nesih is called gubart (like dust), because the letters appear as small as motes of dust.

Of the six scripts, sülüs and nesih were especially compatible with Turkish taste. Sülüs, which is called the “mother of calligraphy” in historical sources, is the most amenable of the six scripts to artistic treatment. Its rounded and taut letters can attain great richness. Moreover,
this script gives calligraphers the greatest scope for creating istiflər, or compositions (fig. 11). The advantages of sülüs are especially striking in the case of celi sülüs (celi means “large” here), which can be written with a broad-nibbed pen or enlarged for architectural inscriptions by means of squaring. A sülüs or celi sülüs line in which words or groups of letters are joined is known as müselsel (like a chain). An istif that uses a word or group of words written twice as a symmetrical mirror image, interlocked down the center, is known as aynali or as a müsennə. The terms are also applied when the two sides of a visually symmetrical composition have different texts, one side written normally and one in reverse. As for nesih, even though its letters are curved, they must be arranged in lines, making the script unsuitable for istiflər. Instead, it is used for long texts. Mushafər are commonly written in nesih, and early printing fonts were based on it.

Muhakkak and reyhâni are also suited to arrangement in lines, due to the predominance of straight lines in their letters. Until the sixteenth century, large-format Qur’ans were written in muhakkak, and smaller ones in reyhâni. These scripts were, however, for the most part eventually forgotten. Yet in order to improve their dexterity, calligraphers continued to copy the old masters’ works in these scripts, which were found in kit’alar (see pages 27–29) and albums. In addition, muhakkak has continued to be used for writing the besmele, the Qur’anic formula “In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.” The besmele, which occurs at the beginning of each chapter of the Qur’an except chapter 9 (Tevba), is without doubt the phrase most often written in Ottoman calligraphy. (The besmele in muhakkak can be seen in the top line of the hilye in figure 19.)

The tevkil’ and rikâ’ scripts were mainly used for official purposes and rarely for copying manuscripts. Rikâ’ was developed into a more
attractive form called hatt-i icâze, used especially by calligraphers to write their signatures and diplomas for their students.

The vowel signs and other marks that aid in the reading of Arabic can be used in all six of the scripts, although with Turkish-language texts, nesih, tevki’, and rikâ’ are sometimes written without these signs.

A version of ‘tevki’ that originated in fourteenth-century Persia, where it was used primarily for writing official documents, was called ta’lik. Later, it evolved into a different script named nesh-i ta’lik; in time, this name was changed to the more easily pronounced nesta’lik. Although it bore no relationship to the original Persian ta’lik script, nesta’lik became known as ta’lik after it arrived in Istanbul, in the second half of the fifteenth century. This graceful, delicately formed script is written without vowel signs, which are optional in Persian and Turkish. It has a light and poetic air, in comparison to the majesty of sülüs. A small version of Ottoman ta’lik, called hurde or hafti, was used for literary works and collections of poetry. Hurde ta’lik was also the official script used by kâdîlar (judges) and by muftis, judges entitled to write a fetwâ, or fatwâ (an opinion on şeriat, or Islamic canon law), in the fetvâhâne, or fetwâ department of the office of the highest Islamic authority of the state. Hurde ta’lik, as well as nesih and rikâ’, was used to write vakfiyeler (endowment deeds; cat. no. 22), which were an important feature of Ottoman social life. Celi ta’lik was, after celi sülüs, the most common celi script used on monuments and levhalar (large paper and cardboard panels that can be framed and hung on the wall). The difference between the two scripts can be gauged by comparing the celi ta’lik levha in figure 12 with the celi sülüs levha in figure 11; both levhalar use the same text: “He [God] is the First and the Last, the Manifest, the Hidden” (Qur’an 57:3). Regular-size ta’lik, written with a nib 2 millimeters (½ inch) wide, was largely used for writing kut’alar.

The original ta’lik script used for official correspondence in Persia was also brought to Ottoman Turkey, by the Akkoyunlular Turkomans.
(1467–1501), at some point after 1473. Within a short while, changes were introduced, and because the script was restricted to use in the Imperial Council of State (Divân-i Hümâyun), it became known as divânî. In the sixteenth century, a new variety of the script was derived from the unvocalized divânî script. The new version was called celi divânî. (In calligraphy, the term celi generally means “large,” but here it means “clear” or “evident.”) This majestic version of divânî was written with vowels, reading signs, and decorative features and was used to write only the most significant documents and proclamations. Both forms of the script are written in lines that curve up toward the left, and both require considerable skill to read and write. Moreover, it is almost impossible to add extra words or letters to a line of text. Those characteristics made divânî and celi divânî useful for official documents, as they prevented forgeries and ensured confidentiality.

THE OTTOMANS AND THE ART OF CALLIGRAPHY

The Kayı tribe of the Oğuz Turks came from Central Asia to Anatolia and, under the leadership of Osman Bey, the son of Ertuğrul Gâzi, founded the Ottoman Beylik, or principality, in 1299. After 1360 the principality expanded into southern Europe, quickly becoming a state. The invasion of the Central Asian warlord Timur (Tamerlane) in 1402 put the state’s existence in jeopardy. In 1453, however, the Ottomans conquered Constantinople, and under Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (r. 1451–81), the Ottoman Empire became a world power. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the empire’s fortunes declined, and, in 1923, after a bitter war of independence, the Ottomans ceded to the victorious new Turkish Republic the land that had been the site of their history.

To understand why Ottoman calligraphy is so little known in the West, compared with the calligraphy of the Arabs, Persians, and Central Asians, one must understand something of the relationship between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. From the end of the fourteenth century, the European states attempted by political and military means to prevent the expansion of the Ottoman state. For almost four hundred years (from 1299 to 1683), however, the Ottoman domain continued to grow. To the Europeans, the Ottomans were nothing more than armed invaders on horseback—invasers who followed a religion different from their own. The Christian church encouraged this hostility, fueling the anti-Ottoman alarms that followed the Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683. With their own land and way of life threatened, the Europeans did not look beyond that threat to see the Ottomans’ powerful state legal system or their refined culture, art, and architecture. Ottoman art was assumed to be primitive and the Ottomans, barbarians. Not until the nineteenth century was the value of Turkish art recognized in Europe. Joseph von Hammer (1774–1856) was the first Westerner to explain the special place of calligraphy in Ottoman culture, in his ten-volume *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches* (1827–35). Clément Huart
(1854–1926) continued this line of scholarship, in *Les Calligraphes et les miniaturistes de l’Orient musulman* (1908). Today, many works of Ottoman calligraphy are scattered in various American museums. It is hoped that this exhibition of calligraphy from the Sakıp Sabancı Collection will provide the American viewer with a concentrated overview of the subject.

Following the conquest of Constantinople, a succession of Ottoman master calligraphers shaped the practice of their art by building on the work of their predecessors and altering the shapes of letters, changing the relationship of words to the line, and reconfiguring the internal geometry of letters and words.

The first great calligrapher in this period, Şeyh Hamdullah (853/1452–926/1520; see cat. nos. 1–2) began by emulating the best works executed in the style of Yaqūt al-Mustā’sīrī (Yaqūt). Encouraged by his patron and student Sultan Bāyezīd II (r. 1481–1512), however, he went on to subject the works of Yaqūt to critical scrutiny. He developed a new style of calligraphy about 890/1485, incorporating his own artistic values. Known as Şeyh’s Manner, the new method brought the Yaqūt period of Ottoman calligraphy to a close. In the age of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent (or the Lawgiver; r. 1520–66), the calligrapher Ahmed Karahisārī (875/1470–963/1556; see cat. no. 6) revived the Yaqūt style with unsurpassed brilliance, but it fell into oblivion after his death and could not prevail against the method of Şeyh Hamdullah.

Şeyh’s Manner continued in use for more than 150 years, during which sülüs and nesih spread rapidly. Finally, Hâfiz Osman (1052/1642–1110/1698; see cat. nos. 14–16), another genius of the art, streamlined the style of Şeyh Hamdullah, in the process developing his own style of writing. The Şeyh style was soon abandoned for that of Hâfiz Osman, which remained in the ascendant for a century.

The next important Ottoman calligraphers were İsmail Zühdi (d. 1221/1806; see cat. no. 26) and his brother, Mustafa Râkim (1171/1758–1241/1826; see cat. no. 27), who developed their own styles, inspired by the finest work of Hâfiz Osman. Although masterful work had been written in sülüs, calligraphers had been unable to achieve an aesthetically satisfying version of ceili sülüs. Even the ceili sülüs of Hâfiz Osman was not worthy of an artist of his caliber. It was in the hands of Mustafa Râkim that ceili sülüs, as well as sülüs and nesih, reached a level of excellence, with regard to both the letters themselves and the design of complex compositions. Mustafa Râkim’s approach was to apply to ceili sülüs the principles Hâfiz Osman developed for sülüs. Râkim also perfected the imperial tuğra (calligraphic emblem), which is why both ceili sülüs and the tuğra can be classified as “pre-Râkim” or “post-Râkim.”

Another master of ceili and a successor to Râkim was Sâmi Efendi (1255/1838–1350/1912; see cat. nos. 49–52), who, in a variation on Râkim’s method, applied the sülüs letters of İsmail Zühdi to ceili. Sâmi Efendi also designed the most attractive forms for the vowel signs and other reading aids, and for the tezyînât (decorations) and numbers,
which were used to fill in the empty areas of an *istif*. Today, Sâmi Efendi's method still predominates.

Mahmud Çelâleddin (1165/1752–1245/1829; see cat. nos. 32–33), who was Râkım's contemporary, adapted the style of Hâfiz Osman to his own taste; in his *sülüs* and *nesih* he achieved firm and confident writing. His *celî*, however, was rigid and static. For this reason, Çelâleddin's style was abandoned, and Râkım's prevailed.

Although the great calligrapher and musician Kâdisker Mustafa İzzet Efendi (1216/1801–1293/1876; see cat. nos. 36–37) and his students all adopted a style that included characteristics of the writing of Hâfiz Osman, Çelâleddin, and Râkım, it was their contemporary Şevki Efendi (1245/1829–1304/1887; see cat. nos. 40–41) who developed *sülüs* and *nesih* to a height of perfection never attained previously or surpassed since.

The *divânî* and *celî divânî* scripts reached their peak at the end of the nineteenth century as well (see cat. no. 79). The Ottomans in Istanbul had used these scripts since the second half of the fifteenth century. After the Persian *nesta'lîk* master Mîr ʿImâd al-Hasânî (961/1554–1024/1615) devised the best system for writing *nesta'lîk*, the Turkish calligraphers adopted his method in great numbers. A Turkish style of *nesta'lîk* was born when Mehmed Es'ad Efendi (d. 1213/1798; see cat. no. 28) integrated the most beautiful letters of Mîr ʿImâd into his own style. (Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, it should be noted, was a remarkable calligrapher who was known by the epithet Yesârî, or the Left-Handed, because the right side of his body was paralyzed, obliging him to write with his left hand.) His son, Yesârîzâde Mustafa İzzet Efendi (d. 1265/1849), elaborated detailed rules for this method and in Istanbul developed a style of *celî ta'lîk* that had no match even in Persia. Sâmi Efendi, who was as much a master of *ta'lîk* and *celî ta'lîk* as he was of *celî sülüs*, passed the Turkish style of *ta'lîk* down to our day in its most perfect form.

Two scripts, it should be noted, were not recognized by the Ottomans as being worthy of artistic consideration. The first was *rûk'a*. Despite the similarity of their names, *rûk'a* bears no resemblance to *rûkâ*, the sixth of the six scripts. *Rûk'a* was the script for daily use by every literate Ottoman subject. It was always written with a reed pen whose nib was less than 1 millimeter (∼1/16 inch) wide. In earlier times, the script was written differently by different calligraphers, with no rules or conventions. Mümtaz Efendi (1225/1810–1287/1872) devised a method of writing *rûk'a* called *bâbiâlî rûk'asi*, for use in government offices. Mehmed İzzet Efendi (1257/1841–1302/1905) developed a *rûk'a* script that had strict rules of execution and could be written very quickly, with some letters simplified in comparison to *bâbiâlî rûk'asi*.

The second script that did not merit artistic treatment was *siyâkat*, which was reserved for treasury documents and title deeds. This script was so difficult to read and write, in fact, that it was almost a cipher script.

Clearly, Ottoman calligraphers did not use unchanged the writing that they had originally borrowed from other Islamic countries. Rather,
the stylistic evolution of Ottoman calligraphy involved a continual process of sifting, refining, and elaborating new methods according to the calligraphers' own tastes, without distorting the essential forms of the letters. Moreover, unlike Ottoman architecture, music, and fine and decorative arts, calligraphy did not degenerate under Western influence. Calligraphy was spared this decline for three reasons: the absence in Europe of a comparable art that could exert an influence on calligraphy; the continuation of the master-and-apprentice system among classically trained calligraphers, in which established principles were transmitted from generation to generation; and calligraphy's capacity for self-renewal.

In the Islamic world, there is a widespread adage that “the Qur’an was revealed in the Hijaz; it was best recited in Egypt and best written in Istanbul.” Indeed, taking into account the length of time that the Ottomans maintained this art in its highest form, one cannot label it chauvinism to celebrate the “Turkish art of calligraphy.” There is no denying that in Ottoman Istanbul the miraculous Qur’an was made art on paper. The pearls of the Prophet of Islam’s words and deeds, the hadisler, became pearls of calligraphy. Examples of such works will be found in this catalogue. Here, too, the reader will find other works of art by calligraphers too numerous to mention individually here—artists whose works include everything from collections of poetry to fermanlar (imperial edicts), from inscriptions carved in marble on public fountains to gravestones.

CALLIGRAPHY DECORATION

Although calligraphy arose as an independent art, a great deal of attention was soon paid to decorating it with tezhip (gold illumination) or ebrû (Turkish paper marbling), or both. These colorful decorations added to the attractiveness of the calligraphy, with its limited color range.

The word tezhip (or tezhib) refers primarily to the application of pure gold with a special brush, but it also encompasses the use of a varied palette of colors accompanying the gold. Both yellow (23- to 24-karat) gold and green (18-karat) gold are used, with different burnishing techniques employed to achieve different effects, such as brilliant or matte gold. Another style of ornamentation, halkâr (dissolved-gold work), uses no color except for the color of the background paper. In this technique, the motifs are painted in a wash of gold ink, giving a subtle shaded effect, and outlined in full-strength gold ink. First, however, the design must be drawn. The type of calligraphy, the proportions of the work, and its overall size all play a role in determining an appropriate design.

The art of illumination was developed to a high degree in Iran in the early fifteenth century, during the Timurid period (1370–1507). By the end of the fifteenth century, the Ottomans began to take the art to further heights, using stylized images from the animal and vegetable kingdoms to develop a classic style of ornamentation marked by flat surfaces and, often, brilliant color. At the end of the seventeenth
century. Ottoman illumination entered a period of stagnation, and in the eighteenth century, under the influence of Western art, it began to lose its identity altogether. By the nineteenth century, the borders of calligraphic works were decorated with derivative designs that gave the illumination a strange quality. Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, however, artists seeking to revive the classic styles have brought about a renaissance in the art.

Illumination is a costly process, because of the gold and the labor involved. An economical alternative to an illuminated border is a border made of ebrû paper (cat. nos. 1, 13–14, 19, 21, 23, 33, 39, 54, 57, and 59). Ebrû—the word comes from the Persian abr, meaning “cloud”—is made with a bath of water thickened with gum tragacanth (kître) and contained in a special trough. Pigments from natural earths and other sources are ground and mixed with water and ox gall, which causes them to float and expand when sprinkled on the surface of the tragacanth bath. Designs are made by drawing a stylus through the pigments. When a piece of paper is laid on the bath, the pigments adhere to it. When the paper is raised, the design is lifted off the water. The paper is then dried. Later, it is cut and pasted onto the desired areas of the work.

THE USES OF CALLIGRAPHY
BOOKS

Before the invention of the printing press, the most important use of calligraphy was to make a copy (mushaf, or codex) of the Qur’an (fig. 13; see also cat. nos. 3, 5–7, 9, 11, 15, 20, 40, 43, 45, and 47–48). Prayer handbooks (see cat. nos. 4 and 42) and scientific and literary works were
of secondary importance. The earliest Qur'ans were written in kūfī; later, such scripts as muhakkak, reyhānī, and nesīh were used. By the sixteenth century, mushafār were being written in combinations of scripts—muhakkak with nesīh or reyhānī, for example, or even three scripts per page: muhakkak, sülüs, and nesīh. According to Ottoman taste, nesīh was the most suitable script for the sacred task of copying the Qur'an. And in the hands of the Ottomans, over the course of four centuries from Şeyh Hamdullah on, nesīh developed an easy readability.

Although there are no comprehensive historical sources that give the exact dimensions of the different types of Qur'ans, various references yield the following standard sizes:

1. camī mushafī: the mosque Qur'an; the largest Qur'an, written for and donated to a specific mosque
2. büyük (kebîr) kut'a mushafī: the large Qur'an; one-half the size of the mosque Qur'an
3. vezirī kut'a mushafī: the vezir (wazir) Qur'an; one-half the size of the büyük Qur'an
4. küçük (rübu') kut'a mushafī: the small Qur'an; one-half the size of the vezirī Qur'an and one-quarter the size of the büyük Qur'an
5. sümün kut'a mushafī: the one-eighth-size Qur'an; one-half the size of the küçük Qur'an and one-eighth the size of the büyük Qur'an
6. sancak mushafī: the emblem Qur'an; the smallest Qur'an, of no fixed size, but usually hexagonal or octagonal in format; affixed to the tip of the pole of a military standard

Qur'ans are encountered that do not conform to this classification, of course. But regardless of their proportions, Ottoman Qur'ans were always vertical in orientation. Use of the mustar ruler allowed the calligrapher to lay out and repeat perfect guidelines for the text, page after page, cleanly and simply.

Before the printing press was introduced into the Ottoman world, large numbers of calligraphers earned their living by copying the Qur'an, which has more than six hundred pages. Everyone wanted his own Qur'an—by an outstanding calligrapher or by an ordinary one, according to the commissioner's financial means. A person who could afford no Qur'an at all could read one at a mosque or Sufi lodge where a charitable donor had paid for a camī mushafī. Many calligraphers could write quickly: Çemşir Hâfiz Salih (d. 1236/1820) completed a record 454 mushafār in his lifetime, and Ramazan bin İsmail (d. 1091/1680; see cat. no. 9) made 400. These masters and others could be thought of as living printing presses, given the swiftness of their work. In general, however, meticulously prepared Qur'ans with high artistic value took a long time to complete. The length of time depended on the speed and mood of the calligrapher, which could vary not only from calligrapher to calligrapher but even from moment to moment in the same calligrapher's life, as illustrated by the story of
Yahya Hilmi Efendi (1249/1833–1325/1907; see the entry for cat. no. 47).

Traditionally, calligraphers who copied Qur’ans would begin at the tenth section, or cüzz (there are thirty sections in all, generally twenty pages each), write to the end, and then return to the Fatiha (opening chapter) and finish the first nine sections. By this means, the calligrapher was able to work out any difficulties with the script in section 10 through section 30, ensuring a perfect nesih for the opening sections.

After finishing the lettering of each page, the calligrapher would go back and, using a smaller pen, write in the vowel signs and reading signs. Finally, using red (lāl) ink, the calligrapher would add the secawend (stop, pause, and other instructions for recitation, whether informally by the individual or formally in the mosque). During these final operations, the calligrapher would check for mistakes, removing any page on which there was an error and substituting a correct page. The extracted page, known as a muhrec sahife, was given to an illuminator to use as a sample to display his gilding talent to potential customers.

Once the text was finished, the Qur’an was illuminated. Especially rich designs were used on the first two pages, which consist of the first chapter (Fatiha) and the beginning of the second chapter (Bakara). These two most imposing pages of a handwritten Qur’an are called the serlevha (cat. nos. 3, 5, 49, 43, and 48). Exceptional Qur’ans aside, the remaining pages are not illuminated but decorated with a ruled frame around the text. The frame, called the cedvel, is gold, outlined with delicate black or colored lines called tahrirler; which are also used to enhance other gilded designs.

The illuminator filled the spaces between each ayet, or verse, with a rosette-type decoration called a dura, or stop. The most inventive illuminators came up with a large number of designs for these decorations so they would not be repeated too often—quite a feat, considering that there are more than six thousand stops in a single Qur’an. In addition, the illuminator put various section marks in the border. A cüzz gülü (one-thirtieth-section rosette) appeared every twenty pages, and a hizib gülü (one-quarter-section rosette) every five pages. A secde gülü (prostration rosette) was placed in the border next to each place in the text where the reader must prostrate himself. After each ten ayetler came a special marker called the aşere gülü (ten rosette), and at the beginning of each chapter, or sure, is a sure başı tezhibi (chapter-head illumination; see especially cat. nos. 20 and 47). Two of these headings appear in the serlevha, and there are 112 more in the text. At the end of the mushaf, a page called the hâtime tezhibi was also illuminated, giving the artist an opportunity to demonstrate his skill. The calligrapher’s signature is found on this page.

Following the illumination, the calligrapher used white-lead ink (üstübec) to write in, on the gilded areas and rosettes, the titles of the chapters, as well as the cüzz, hizib, secde, and aşere titles.

The finest mushafılar were joint productions, especially in the sixteenth century. Designs and motifs were conceived and planned by a
group of artists called *tarrahlar*, or planners. The gold *cedveller* were prepared by artists called *cedvelkeșler*, or frame drawers. A separate group was responsible for putting the black outlines, or *tahrirler*, around the gold illumination. Still other artists would produce the *duraklar*. One group would supply the gold ink, a second would apply the gold ink in the designs, and a third would apply the colors. This was the method used to illuminate precious manuscripts at the palace *nakışhâne*, or department of illuminators and miniaturists. The most delicate work was done by young artists whose eyes were not yet weakened, under the supervision of master illuminators. In later centuries, however, a master illuminator would undertake all these tasks with a few pupils in what was, at best, a slow process.

The final step was binding the volume. Many illuminators were also bookbinders who produced the classic bindings called *şemse kap*. In this style of binding, carved dies are used to stamp the *şemse* (sunburst design) and other motifs into the leather binding, according to formal design rules. The embossed leather was generally decorated with gilding (fig. 14). A unique feature of an Islamic binding is the envelope flap, or *mikleb*, on the left side of the back cover. This flap can be tucked between the pages to serve as a bookmark. In addition to being bound as a single-volume *mushaf*, the Qur’an can be bound in thirty-volume sets, one volume per *cüz*. Sometimes the thirtieth *cüz*—*Amme cüzü*,
Figure 15. Traditional kitâb layouts

Qur'an 78–114—was bound separately (cat. no. 38). The chapter called Enâm (cat. nos. 2 and 16), plus the chapters most frequently recited (during worship and on prescribed occasions), is sometimes produced as a volume called Enâm-i Şerif (cat. no. 24).

In addition to the Qur'an, other popular religious books are the Delâili’l-Hayrât (cat. no. 31), a prayer book that often contains miniatures of Mecca and Medina, and the Eşrâd-i Şerife, which includes special prayers for use in Sufi orders. These books do not have an illuminated double-page spread like the Qur’anic serlevha. Rather, only the right-hand unvan sahifesı (title or opening page) is heavily illuminated (see cat. nos. 2, 16, and 38).

For books written in the Turkish language, nesih script without vowels, and the naturally unvocalized small ta’lik, was preferred (fig. 23). It would not be an exaggeration to say that hurde ta’lik raises the level of a work, such as a collection of the poetry of a single poet, called a dîvân.

Fetvâlar (opinions on Islamic canon law) and vakfiyeler (endowment deeds; cat. no. 22) were also bound into books.
KIT’ALAR

The word kit’a, which means “piece” or “section,” has come to be used as a technical term to describe a specific type of calligraphic work that is rectangular in shape, is oriented either vertically or horizontally, and has writing on one side of the paper only (cat. nos. 1, 10, 12–14, 18–19, 21, 23, 25–26, 28–29, 33, 36–37, 41, 53, 55, and 57). (Square kit’alar are made occasionally when there is no other choice—when, for instance, the amount of text alters the border proportions, or when the kit’a needs to be fitted into an album [see cat. no. 10].) Commonly, the paper on which the calligrapher writes is pasted in the center of a larger cardboard backing, leaving four equal margins for later decoration with illumination, ebrû paper, or even plain polished paper. The narrow band surrounding the writing is called the iç pervaz, or inner border; outside of it is the dış pervaz, or outer border. In place of the iç pervaz there can be one or two ara pervazlar, or interval borders. The entire border area is also called the kenar suyu.

Kit’alar are classified according to the kinds of scripts used in them. There are sülüs-and-nesih kit’alar; muhakkak-and-reyhâni kit’alar; and so forth. Among the Ottoman calligraphers, the most widespread kind of kit’a is the sülüs-and-nesih kit’a, which typically has a line of text in sülüs and three to five lines of nesih underneath. Sometimes the nesih lines are written on a slant, from upper right to lower left.

Figure 15 shows common kit’a layouts. In diagram A, the area where the text appears resembles a human torso. For that reason, the rectangular spaces that are left open for decoration (marked K) are called koltuklar, or armpits. On a vertical layout, such as in diagram B, the preference is to write the first and last lines in sülüs, with eight to ten lines of nesih in between. Sometimes an additional line of sülüs (or, in early kit’alar, muhakkak) is written in the middle, as in diagram C. Some nineteenth-century kit’alar were made by putting two sülüs-and-nesih kit’alar together, one on top of the other (see diagram D). In these double kit’alar, the lower nesih section was sometimes written on a slant to break the visual uniformity.

A special form of kit’a was used for a student exercise (meşk). In this format (diagram E), there is one line of sülüs, followed by two lines of nesih, followed by one more line of sülüs. As in all formats, the nesih lines are shorter than the sülüs lines to leave room for the koltuklar. There are also kit’alar written only in nesih or only in sülüs.

Although the dimensions of sülüs-and-nesih kit’alar vary, most are in the range of 4 to 6 inches in height; the widths range from 1.5 to 2 times the height. (Proportions differ for vertical kit’alar.) The sülüs-and-nesih kit’alar in this exhibition will give an idea of both common and not-so-common dimensions (cat. nos. 1, 10, 12–15, 19, 21, 23, 25–26, 33, 36–37, 41, and 57).

The ta’liq kit’a was usually used for poetry. In general, the text of a ta’liq kit’a is two beytitter, or poetic verses, written one under the other. The verses can be separated by a gilded rule, or cedvel. When the writing
slants upward, from the lower right to the upper left, as in diagram F, the work is called a mâîl kit‘a, or inclining kit‘a (see also figs. 10 and 21). The smaller the angle of inclination of the text, the wider the kit‘a will be. The preferred angle is forty degrees. The triangular areas marked K in diagram F are called muska koltuklar (triangular koltuklar) or köşelikler (corner pieces). These areas can be illuminated. (Occasionally, there are ta‘lîk kit‘alar with no illumination at all—not even border lines.) In those ta‘lîk kit‘alar that were laid out with the mistar, triangular areas were always right triangles. Later on, however, this rule was not always followed, except in the four corners of the piece. It was the practice of the Persian (Herat) school to make the top margin of the
ta’lîk ku’t’a twice as wide as the side and bottom margins. This practice was adopted in some Ottoman ku’t’alar (see fig. 15, diagram F; and cat. no. 28).

When the lines of text in a ta’lîk ku’t’a are horizontal, it is called a düz ta’lîk ku’t’a, or level ta’lîk ku’t’a. Most of these were written by the calligraphy teacher (hoca, muallim, or üstâd) for the student to study and copy; they are called meşk ku’t’aları, or exercise ku’t’alar (cat. nos. 28, 29, 53, and 55).

Another form of ku’t’a is the karalama (blackening), a practice piece filled with line after line of calligraphy, complete with measuring dots (fig. 7). A calligrapher would work on a karalama in his spare time, to maintain his technique. Today, many collectors prize these handsome pieces and consider them akin to abstract art.

Until the fourteenth century, ku’t’alar were pasted not to boards but edge to edge so they could be rolled up like a scroll (tomar) and kept in an accompanying leather case. (Some calligraphic works are actually made as scrolls.) The edge-to-edge arrangement was later abandoned in favor of calligraphy albums called murakkaalar. Most ku’t’alar were originally part of such an album and, after coming loose from the album, would be framed and hung on a wall.

MURAKKAALAR

To make a calligraphy album, all the ku’t’alar to be included are pasted on specially prepared pieces of cardboard, then trimmed to the same dimensions. Pairs of ku’t’alar are placed back to back and bound at all four edges with thin strips of leather or cloth, which not only hold the pieces together but also protect the edges from wear and tear. The attached pairs are then bound between covers. This kind of album is called a düz murakka (simple album), kitap murakka (book-type album), or simply murakka. The oldest examples of the book-type album date from the end of the fifteenth century. This format had two advantages: besides protecting the edges of the pages, it allowed different works by different calligraphers and even from different eras to be compiled into a single unit. Although miniatures or illuminations were sometimes made into albums, the majority of murakkaalar consisted of calligraphy.

In the körükü müarakka (bellows album), the pairs of ku’t’alar are bound at one edge only. Then the pairs are joined together so that they can be opened out accordion-fashion and viewed all at once. All four edges are protected by leather strips. In this type of album, only the first page is attached to the binding (fig. 16; see also cat. nos. 10, 18, and 36).

Another kind of murakka is made up of teaching exercises. Albums could be made from lessons on single or double letters, which are called müfredat (singles; cat. nos. 28 and 41), or from lessons consisting of sentences, usually from poetic odes, prayers, Qur’anic verses, or hadisler (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad), which are called mürekkebät (compounds; cat. nos. 29, 53, and 55). If the ku’t’alar were created especially for a meşk murakka (exercise album), the calligrapher signed only the final ku’t’a of the series.
When a series of kut'alar is written in a specific order for a murakkaa, the text of each script runs from kit'a to kit'a. In other words, one reads the sülüs lines continuously through the entire murakkaa, and then the nesih lines. For that reason, murakkaa kut'alar that have been unbound often include sentences with no beginning or end. In such a müteselsil murakkaa, or sequential album, only the final kit'a is signed (cat. no. 13).

In an album composed of independent kut'alar, each kit'a is signed by its calligrapher. Such an album, which may include works by a number of calligraphers, is called a toplama murakkaa, or collection album. If one kit'a in a toplama murakkaa is smaller than the others, the inner border may be widened, or an extra strip of paper, illumination, or ebrû called a takoz (chock) may be pasted on one or more edges of the inner border. There are also murakkaalar in which the kit'alar have not been assembled in so scrupulous a fashion (cat. no. 1).

LEVHALAR

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially among the Ottomans, a demand developed for the levha, or panel, an art form that (with some exceptions) uses the celi sizes of scripts (cat. nos. 27, 52, 34, 59, 44, 46, 49, 51-52, 54, and 58-59). The resulting work is framed and hung on the wall, to be appreciated as a whole composition as well as read for its text. (A special category of levha, the hilye, is discussed below.)

Successful celi—writing large enough to be read from a distance—requires skill in both hand and eye. (In order to print examples of celi writing in a book, they must be reduced from their original size. And when a celi sülüs work or a celi ta'lik work is reduced for publication, it
is nearly indistinguishable from regular-size sülüs or ta’llık.) In comparison with normal-size writing, celi writing—especially the istif, a composition of superimposed and interlaced letters and words—is very difficult and represents the ultimate achievement in calligraphy.

Calligraphers could choose various formats for their compositions in celi sülüs: the writing area could be square, nearly square (cat. no. 27), rectangular (fig. 11 and cat. no. 54), circular (cat. no. 58), or elliptical (cat. nos. 46 and 54). In rarer cases, the composition took the shape of a bird, flower, or fruit.

The difficulty of producing celi compositions led to a practical way of obtaining multiple copies from a single original. First, the calligrapher practices a passage over and over to get the composition just right. Then, using the final work, the calligrapher makes a kalıp, or stencil. If the inscription is too large to be executed directly by hand, it is first written on a smaller scale, then enlarged by squaring. That is, the calligrapher writes the inscription in a convenient size, then divides the work into squares, as on graph paper. Next, he divides a piece of paper the same size as the desired finished inscription into an equivalent number of squares, proportionally larger. Then he copies the calligraphy from the original work, square by square, to the larger paper and from it makes the stencil. (This is the same method used to embellish mosques, teaching institutions, and fountains with inscriptions carved in marble.)

In the early days, before the celi scripts were perfected, stencils were written on white paper with lampblack ink, and any necessary corrections were made by scraping with the correction knife. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, calligraphers had begun to write their stencils with orpiment ink on black or dark brown paper (fig. 17; for a levha prepared from this stencil, see cat. no. 51). This method was preferable for two reasons. First, orpiment ink does not cause a thick buildup of ink on the paper; and second, corrections can be made by covering the mistake with lampblack ink and then writing over it with orpiment ink. It is possible to perform this operation several times over without damaging the paper.

The stencil is made by placing a few sheets of white paper the same size as the original under the composition and securing them lightly with paste. The calligrapher then uses a fine needle, held in a watchmaker’s pin vise, to pierce holes all along the borders of the letters and other elements of the composition. When all the parts of the composition have been outlined with tiny holes, the white papers underneath the original are separated from each other. These alt kalıplar (bottom stencils) are inspected carefully to be sure the holes faithfully represent the calligraphy. The original copy, on black or brown paper, is called the üst kalıp, or top stencil.

To transfer the calligraphy to another piece of paper or to marble or some other surface, the calligrapher places an alt kalıp on the new surface. If the background is light in color, the calligrapher uses a small cotton bag filled with finely powdered willow charcoal to transfer the
design. As the bag is moved over the alt kalip and patted, the charcoal filters through the bag and through the holes of the stencil, leaving small black dots on the light background. If the calligrapher wishes to transfer the composition to a dark background, for subsequent reproduction with gold ink, he uses a bag filled with chalk powder, which leaves small white dots. This operation is called yazı silmek or yazı silkelemek (to pounce the writing). (The top stencil is never used for this purpose, because it will get soiled with charcoal or chalk. Instead, the top stencil is used as a guide, so that the calligraphy can be transferred and reproduced perfectly. Unless the exact relation of the perforations to the original writing is understood, the reproduced writing can be too thick or too thin.)

After pouncing, the calligrapher uses a small-tipped pen and lampblack ink to trace the dots and establish the outline of the writing, which will be filled in with ink. Or, if he trusts his hand, he will use a pen of the same width as that used to produce the original work and simply rewrite the text by following the dots (cat. no. 54). (The charcoal or chalk can be brushed away later.) Copies made from a stencil are most highly esteemed if they are made by the calligrapher himself. Sometimes, however, inferior celi copies were made by people whose skills were not up to the task. For this reason, calligraphers kept their stencils away from unskilled copyists.

Copies made in gold ink, rather than lampblack ink, were often executed by illuminators rather than calligraphers. The process for producing a levha of this kind is called zer-endüd (painted in gold; fig. 11). In this method, a panel of high-quality cardboard is coated with a non-water-soluble mineral pigment bound with gelatin and applied while hot. Among the colors used are black, ultramarine, “duck’s-head green,” “fez red,” and brown. After the panel is prepared, the design is transferred via the stencil and chalk powder. Then the contours (tahripler) are carefully drawn with a thin gold ink and a fine brush. The area within these lines is filled with a full-strength gold ink. After the work is dry, it is burnished to a matte finish using the zermühre, or gold burnisher (fig. 8), a highly polished, specially shaped stone, usually agate, set in a handle. This tool is used only for burnishing gold. The resulting work can be truly magnificent. Indeed, when the gilding was done by master illuminators, these zer-endüd levhalar were as valuable as the originals. Some of the levhaler in the Sakip Sabancı Collection were made in this way (cat. nos. 27, 34, 49, 51–52, and 58).

As the size of gold celi works increases, so does the expense of the gold ink. To keep costs at a reasonable level, very large zer-endüd levhalar are produced by applying gold leaf directly to the panel, rather than making it into ink. The background material for such pieces may be a special cloth, called muşamba (originally, muşamba; a cloth coated with colored beeswax), or it may be a painted wooden or zinc panel. The writing is transferred to the background material by pouncing the stencil with chalk powder. The letters and other elements are painted
with an adhesive varnish size. In Ottoman times, this size was called *lika or lâk* and was made from linseed oil; today, a substance called *mixtion* is used. After the size has reached the desired tack, the gold leaf is laid on it. The gold leaf adheres to the size, producing an attractive matte appearance. Gold leaf applied in this way is resistant to every weather condition. All the large gold inscriptions in mosques, as well as those cut in marble in low relief, are prepared in this way.

The *celî* forms of *sülüs* and *ta’lîk* are the most dazzling. After the advances made by Mustafa Râkim, *cellî sülüs*—above all in the *zer-endâd* style—gained a magnificence no other writing can match. Whether executed with a pen or enlarged by squaring, the forms of *celî* writing are not exactly the same as those of normal-size writing. The smaller scripts have been likened to a child, the larger ones to a mature adult. Just as the proportions of a child’s limbs differ from those of an adult, normal-size writing, too, differs from *celî.* The great writers of *celî* were aware of the principles of perspective. While composing their inscriptions, they took into account the height at which the writing was to be placed and adjusted the dimensions of the letters accordingly, to ensure the correct visual effect.

**Mosque Calligraphy**

As gathering places for Muslims to worship, mosques are decorated with clear *celî* inscriptions that all may see. The most commonly used texts come from the Qur’ān and *hadîs* literature, which are in Arabic. The preferred script for these texts is fully vocalized *cellî sülüs.* A band of writing called the *kuşak yazısı* winds around the upper part of the mosque walls and around the drum of the dome (or, when there is more than one, around the drums of all the domes). The crowns of the domes and semidomes are decorated with special circular or semicircular compositions called *kubbe yazısı,* or dome writing. All these inscriptions are in *celî sülüs.*

The mosque inscriptions are done by a professional painter called a *nakkâş,* or decorator, who specializes in calligraphy and decoration. The work is executed in gold leaf against a dark background or carved in marble in low relief, which is more durable. An attractive way of finishing a marble relief is to paint the recessed background a dark color and gild the writing with gold leaf. Until the seventeenth century, the bands of writing were generally done in glazed tile; subsequently, the preferred method has been to paint or gild them. Inscriptions in domes and over windows are also done either in paint or in gold leaf. The customary circular *levhalar* in mosques are written on *muşamba* cloth or on wooden or metal panels that have been painted a dark color. The writing is in *celî sülüs,* executed in gold leaf. The customary texts are the *ism-i celâl,* the name of God; the *ism-i Nebî,* the name of the Prophet; the *çiharyâr,* the names of the Four Friends, that is, Abû Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmân, and ʿAli, the first four caliphs; and the *Hasanayn,* the names of Hasan and Husayn, grandsons of the Prophet.
INSCRIPTIONS

The term *kitâbe*, or inscription, refers to writing on the exterior facade (occasionally the interior) of a monument or public building, such as a mosque, Sufi lodge, educational institution, religious school, caravansary, small neighborhood water fountain (*çeşme*), bathhouse, grand public fountain (*sebil*), library, and so forth. Inscriptions are also found on such freestanding stone markers as archery target stones and gravestones. Most inscriptions are carved in marble in low relief. Like the *kuşak* inside a mosque, these inscriptions can be made with the raised writing gilded with gold leaf and the recessed background painted a dark color. *Çelî sülüs* and, especially for Turkish-language inscriptions, *celî ta’lik* were the most commonly used scripts, and the most beautiful examples are to be found in Istanbul. In the United States, a lovely example of an unpainted marble inscription is to be found on the seventeenth level of the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C. It was presented to the United States in 1853 as a symbol of Ottoman friendship. The inscription was copied by Kâdiasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi (see cat. nos. 36–37).

Apart from these uses, calligraphic inscriptions have appeared throughout history on such materials as wood, leather, metal, and ceramics and on such objects as seals, rings, mosque lamps, helmets, swords, and various tools (fig. 6). But with the great majority of such works, the beauty of the writing is lost, because the calligraphy is too modified and far removed from its pen-written original.

HİLYELER

Islam rejects the depiction of anyone who could be idolized. For this reason, aside from a few insignificant miniatures, there have been no pictures of the Prophet Muhammad. Nevertheless, in reliable original sources contemporaries of the Prophet of Islam vividly describe him in words, allowing each believer to picture the Prophet in his own heart and mind—an approach that is clearly more in keeping with an iconoclastic faith than depicting the Prophet in drawings or paintings would be. These descriptions are called *hîlyeler*, as are calligraphic works made from the descriptions (fig. 19; see also cat. nos. 17, 35, and 56). In addition to meaning “description,” the word *hîlye* (Arabic *hîlîya*) means “ornament” and “adornment.”

The most commonly used *hîlye* is that of the Prophet’s son-in-law ʿAlî, which can be translated as follows:

Transmitted from ʿAlî, may God be pleased with him, who, when asked to describe the Prophet, peace be upon him, would say: He was not too tall or too short. He was medium-size. His hair was not short and curly, nor was it lank, but in between. His face was not narrow, nor was it fully round, but there was a roundness to it. His skin was white. His eyes were black. He had long eyelashes. He was big-boned and had wide shoulders. He had no body hair except in the middle of his chest. He had thick hands and feet.
When he walked, he walked inclined, as if descending a slope. When he looked at someone, he looked at them full-face. [Part A]

Between his shoulders was the seal of prophecy, the sign that he was the last of the prophets. He was the most generous-hearted of men, the most truthful of them in speech, the most mild-tempered of them, and the noblest of them in lineage. Whoever saw him unexpectedly was in awe of him. And whoever associated with him familiarly, loved him. Anyone who would describe him would say, I never saw, before him or after him, the like of him. Peace be upon him. [Part B]
(A number of other hilye texts are also available, taken from hadis literature.)

In its complete form, this text is called the hilye-i şerif (the illustrious hilye), hilye-i saadet (the felicitous hilye), and hilye-i Nebevi (the hilye concerning the Prophet), terms that imbue the concept with a deeper meaning. Since the early days of Islam, this text has been written in tiny nesih in a small format for carrying in the breast pocket as a sign of love and esteem for the Prophet. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Hafiz Osman developed the stunning graphic form of the hilye that is familiar to us today.

Figure 18 shows the various sections of the hilye:

1. baş makam (the head station): The besmele is always written here.
2. göbek (the belly): Part A of the hilye text is written in this central cartouche, which is usually circular, oval, or square in shape.
3. hilal (the crescent): The Prophet Muhammad, who illuminated this world with his light, is often likened to the sun and moon. The göbek symbolizes the sun and the hilal the crescent moon that surrounds it. The hilal is not a requisite part of the hilye, however; the göbek can appear without it. When it is used, the crescent can be decorated with gold or gold-illuminated designs.
4, 5, 6, 7. From the standpoint of embellishment, the richest part of the hilye is the square that contains the göbek and the hilal. In the four corners, it also contains the names of the ciharyar, Abû Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmân, and ‘Alî. In place of the four caliphs’ names, four names of the Prophet can be written instead: Ahmad, Mahmûd, Hâmid, and Hamîd. On some hilyeler, this area is used for the names of the așere-i mübeserere, that is, the ten companions of the Prophet who were promised eternal life in heaven. (On occasion, some of their names are found in the koltuklar, areas 10 and 11 in the diagram.)
8. âyet (Qur’anic verse): In this section, a Qur’anic verse about the Prophet is written. The most common is: “And We [God] did not send you [Muhammad] except to be a mercy to the universe” (Qur’an 21:107). Two other verses are also used: “Truly, you [Muhammad] are of a tremendous nature” (Qur’an 68:4); or “And God is significant witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God” (Qur’an 48:28–29).
9. etek (the skirt, or lower part): This area contains Part B of the hilye text, along with a prayer for the Prophet and the calligrapher’s signature.
10, 11. koltuklar (armpits): On either side of the etek are empty spaces called koltuklar, which may be illuminated.

Note that this is a general scheme; many different models of the hilye also exist (see cat. no. 17 for an example).
The most popular hilyeler are written in sülüs and nesih; in muhakkak, sülüs, and nesih; and in ta‘lîk. In the last century, large hilye levhalar, using celi scripts, were made to be hung on walls. Early hilye levhalar were pasted on wooden panels, as large paper for making big sheets of cardboard was not available. Most of these pieces are now full of holes, having fallen victim to woodworms. As more-sizable paper became available, subsequent hilye levhalar have escaped this fate.

Illuminators took great pains to decorate hilye levhalar with the art of tezhib (illumination). The pieces were gilded abundantly with yellow and green gold. To make them worthy of depicting the dignity of the Prophet, some hilyeler were even written in gold ink in the zerendûd method. Occasionally, too, one comes across a hilye with miniatures of Mecca and Medina just above the besmele.

FERMANLAR, BERATLAR, AND MENŞÜRLAR
Specialists at the Ottoman Imperial Council of State prepared various official documents, including fermanlar (imperial edicts; cat. no. 67), beratlar (which included imperial titles of privilege and grants of freehold property [mülk beratı]; cat. nos. 61, 63–66, and 68–69), and menşürlar (imperial appointments; cat. nos. 70–71). The tuğra (calligraphic emblem) of the reigning sultan was inscribed at the head of the document, and before it came a short prayer. Originally, these documents were made as tomarlar (scrolls) or pleated for safekeeping. In recent times, people have begun to frame such pieces and hang them as

Figure 20. The elements of the tuğra. This tuğra was created by Mustafa Râkim (1771/1778–1341/1826) for Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808–39).
works of art. Here, these documents will be discussed from the standpoint of their calligraphy and illumination, rather than from their content and meaning.

Just as nations today represent themselves with symbols or emblems, so in Ottoman times a calligraphic emblem represented the state. That emblem was the tuğra, a calligraphic treatment of the reigning sovereign’s name that would be official so long as that sovereign remained on the throne. The earliest example is the simple tuğra of Sultan Orhan Gâzi (r. 1326–59).

The tuğra consists of the sovereign’s name, his patronymic, and the invocation el-muzaffer dâimâ (the ever-victorious), written in a special shape. Tuğralar are also encountered consisting of the names of Sufi saints, a verse from the Qur’an, or a hadîs (saying of the Prophet Muhammad). Figure 20 shows the main elements of the tuğra: the kürsî or sere, which is the monogram proper; the tuğlar or elîsler (shafts); the zûfeler (tassels); the iç beyza and dış beyza (inner and outer ovals); and the hançer or kollar (dagger or arms—the double tail-like projections growing out of, and to the right of, the ovals).

The tuğra developed slowly, achieving its basic form in the reign of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (1451–81). It reached its classic, lavish form during the reign of Sultan Süleyman I, the Magnificent (or the Lawgiver; 1520–66), in keeping with the splendor of that period. The tuğra was written in gold ink, delicately outlined in black ink. From the period of Mehmed the Conqueror on, the spaces between the letters were illuminated, a practice that continued until the mid-nineteenth century. All the skills of the illuminator were displayed in these works so that, from time to time, the tuğra itself was nearly hidden behind the decoration, like a bride behind her veil (cat. nos. 64–65).

From the first quarter of the seventeenth century, a certain coarseness was sometimes evident in the illumination, and from then on, the tuğra began to degenerate.

With the revolution of shape and dimension in calligraphy brought about by Mustafa Râkım at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the tuğra was transformed into a masterpiece of proportion. It was no longer thought necessary to illuminate it, but, under Western influence, the tuğra was often surrounded with radiating sun rays in gold. While Râkım’s style of tuğra is frequently found on monumental inscriptions, it is rarely seen on documents issued by the Imperial Council of State. The most beautiful examples of the tuğra, simple and without illumination, were produced from the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz until the end of the Ottoman epoch (1861–1922; cat. nos. 50, 70, and 71).

In early Ottoman times, official documents were written only in tevktî or rîkâ’, because these scripts are easy to read. Beginning in the sixteenth century, however, the more difficult divânî and celti divânî were used and thus entered their most perfect and regularized period. Although it is the right of the calligrapher to sign his work, the documents that came from the Imperial Council of State never bore
signatures for the tuğra or the text. It is said that the official calligraphers who worked at the Council of State had to take an oath never to use either divânî or celi divânî outside the council.

Black, red, green, and blue inks, as well as gold, were used to write the tuğralar and the divânî and celi divânî scripts on fermanlar, beratlar, menşurlar, and other official documents. The choice of which of the two scripts to use, which colors, and whether or not to use a gold-sprinkled background (zer-eşan) was not arbitrary. Each had a specific meaning in Ottoman protocol.
A CALLIGRAPHER’S TRAINING

Children would begin to study calligraphy at their local elementary school to determine if they had any talent for it. To work at beautiful writing at a young age trains the eye in visual proportion and aesthetic value. Early lessons were a means of advancing those with talent and inclination for the art.

The great masters of calligraphy received a regular monthly or daily salary from their positions at the Imperial Council of State, the Imperial Palace Service (Enderûn-ı Hümâyûn), or the like, or from teaching posts at a school or endowed institution such as the meşkêhâne, which was a calligraphy studio attached to a religious college. Master calligraphers also gave private lessons at their homes on appointed days. Even the poorest of these calligraphers expected no remuneration from their students, however, not even gifts. This tradition has been scrupulously observed up to the present.

From the earliest days, calligraphers were required to have the proper certification to practice the art. The novice calligrapher had to have his teacher’s written permission, the icâzetnâme. Without it, he could not put his signature on his work.

To learn calligraphy, the student (talebe) goes to the hoca, or teacher, who writes a model line, while the student is watching, for the student to study and copy. This text is called a meşk (model or lesson). To receive this model for study is called meşk almak, to take the model; to teach it is called meşk etmek, to do the model. (Meşkler are discussed in the entries for cat. nos. 28–29 and 41.)
The student studies the *meşk* of the teacher and makes copies that are as close to the original as possible. This practice is called *taklīd*. To correct the lesson, the *hoca* writes the correct forms, measured in dots, directly beneath any letters or words that do not meet his approval. This is called *çıkartma* (extraction). Using the corrected lesson as a guide, the student prepares a new *meşk*. If the teacher or master (*üstād*) sees a shortcoming, he again writes his *çıkartma* under that part of the lesson (fig. 2).

In *meşk* exercises, the *sülüs* and *nesih* scripts are shown sometimes separately (cat. no. 18) but most often together (cat. no. 41). The same teacher teaches both scripts. *Ta’līk* is always studied separately, and usually with a different teacher (cat. nos. 28, 29, 53, and 55). Because their use was confined to the Imperial Council of State, the *tuğra* and the *dīvānī* and *celel dīvānī* scripts were taught only there. *Rī‘a*, which had utilitarian rather than artistic value, was first taught at elementary school and later was quickly mastered at the various official departments and offices.

Novices whose aptitude was weak were eliminated while still practicing the *mişrefet* (singles) exercises (cat. nos. 28 and 41); that is, *meşkler* composed of single and double letters. Those who passed this stage could look forward with hope to a future as a calligrapher. The next step would be the exercises called *mürekkebât* (compounds; cat. nos. 29, 53, and 55), which involved words and sentences of more than two letters. Students studying *sülüs* and *nesih* would copy in Arabic one of the long poetic odes called *kasıdelel* (cat. nos. 50 and 56). Those studying *ta’līk* would write a *kasıde* in Persian or Turkish (cat. nos. 29, 53, and 55). Finally, the novice would practice writing well-known Qur’anic verses, *hadısler*, prayers, letters of the alphabetic numbering system (*abcd hesab*, a series of mnemonic words arranged in alphabetical order from one to a thousand, and heavily used for dating purposes), and epigrams concerning the art of calligraphy. Writing these texts would help the student develop an understanding of composition. Students who made steady progress and continued with weekly lessons could work through these stages in three to five years. Those who finished would receive diplomas. The diploma, which gave them the right to sign their own works, is called an *icâzetnāme* (permission document); receiving the document is called *icâzet almak* (receiving permission). When signing a work, the calligrapher writes, in Arabic, *katabahu* (he wrote it; Turkish spelling: *ketebe*) in front of his name, so the diploma can also be referred to as the *ketebe kut’as* (the “he wrote” *kut’a*; fig. 21).

Students earn their teacher’s *icâzet* (permission) by copying a suitable work by one of the great masters, selected by their teacher. Like the practice of copying the teacher’s *meşk*, this process is also known as *taklīd*, or imitation, which has a special meaning in regard to calligraphy. The calligrapher carefully observes the selected composition, imprinting it on his memory. He then writes it on paper with near-photographic fidelity (cat. no. 35). The writing must be so close to the
original that if the student’s work were superimposed over the master’s, no difference would be visible. This difficult feat requires the calligrapher to analyze thoroughly the style and technique of the calligrapher he is copying. Even calligraphers at the height of their art take pleasure in taklīd, as a sign of reverence for the work of a great master. No tracing is employed in this process, and forgery is not an issue. Rather, the calligrapher indicates in the signature that the work is a taklīd and cites the name of the person whose work is imitated. The kit‘a format is usually selected for imitation, and the finished copy constitutes the student calligrapher’s icāzetnāme. Sometimes, however, a section of the Qur‘ān, or even the whole mushaf, is written as an icāzetnāme for a student of nesih. The hilye-i saadet can also serve as an icāzetnāme for a student of sūlūs and nesih.

After the student has written the imitation for an icāzetnāme in sūlūs and nesih and it is approved by the teacher, the teacher writes under it, in rūkā‘(or, as it was later called, hatt-i icāze, or icāzet script), the permission text, izinnāme, granting the student’s diploma. For a student of ta‘līk, the izinnāme is written in hurde ta‘līk. The wording of this text, which is in Arabic, is traditional (fig. 21). The permission formula that is generally used, with some changes or additions, can be translated as follows: “I give permission [icāzet or izin] to the writer of this beautiful kit‘a [student’s name] to sign his name under his work. May God prolong his life and increase his knowledge. I am his teacher.” Here the teacher writes his name and the date.

At last the student has earned the right to the title hattat, or calligrapher. At an icāzet cemiyeti (icāzet assembly), which usually takes place in a mosque, the new calligrapher’s illuminated work is presented to a “jury” composed of masters of calligraphy. This pleasant and auspicious ceremony has been maintained into our own time. Even renowned calligraphers who, for whatever reason, could not receive their icāzet at the usual time would not break with this tradition and so received their icāzet later in their careers.

Throughout the Ottoman era, the most advanced calligrapher in terms of ability, sagacity, and seniority, as determined by the calligraphers themselves, was called the reisü‘l-hattātın, or chief of the calligraphers. On his death, another would be named. The eldest of the living calligraphers was called the şeyhü‘l-hattātın, or the sheikh of the calligraphers, out of respect, but this title was honorary, not official.

Finally, a word about signatures. Over the centuries, the tradition took root to sign a calligraphic work in Arabic, regardless of whether the text was in Turkish, Arabic, or Persian. There were various signature formulas beginning with an Arabic verb: katabahu, namaqahu, harrarahu, or sawwadahu (Turkish spellings: ketebehū, nemekahū, harrerehū, and sevvedehū), all of which mean “he wrote it.” The word preferred among calligraphers to mean “signature” was ketebe. If the work were a meşk or a karalama, it would generally be signed meşkaḫū (he wrote it as a meşk) or with the calligrapher’s name only.
The calligrapher would add Arabic qualifiers to his name, such as fākir (the poor), hakir (the lowly), and mūznib (the sinful)—all terms of humility to deflect any charge of conceit. To show gratitude to his teacher, the calligrapher would cite his teacher’s name and sometimes even add a genealogical tree of the calligraphers of his particular school. At the end of the signature, the calligrapher would ask God to forgive them all, even those who would look at the work.

Works were usually signed in the same script as the text. The hurde ta’lik script was considered the most appropriate for signing ta’lik kut’alar and celi ta’lik levhalar. Signatures for works in sūlus or nesih can be signed in rikā’, which has come to be called icāzet yazısı. Rikā’ calligraphy can be used to write icāzetnâmeler for other branches of knowledge, such as for classical religious education, Sufism, and so forth (fig. 22).
TURKISH CALLIGRAPHY TODAY

Turkish calligraphy reached its height of perfection in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But in 1928, it received a heavy blow when the Turkish Republic supplanted the Arabic alphabet with a modified version of the Latin alphabet. Even though formal instruction in the art was re instituted at the Academy of Fine Arts (now Mimar Sinan University), Istanbul, in 1936, the academy was unable to ensure the training of new calligraphers. As the remaining Ottoman calligraphers died, one by one, this historical chapter seemed closed.

In fact, however, the master-and-student system has continued to produce new calligraphers, with the help of the Center for Islamic History, Art, and Culture (IRCICA), in Istanbul. In addition to its program of publications and conferences, this organization announced in 1986 an international calligraphy competition, to be held every three years. Calligraphers from all Islamic nations, and the United States, participated in the most recent competition. It is pleasing to see that the young Turkish calligraphers are reaching a professional level in the art and are once again increasing in number.

Legibility is the prime goal of the art of calligraphy. While this is indeed the essence of the art, the splendid beauty that resides in the calligraphic strokes should be appreciated as well. “To read beautiful calligraphy,” Kâdıasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi noted, “is like smelling the aroma of a tulip.” Even for those who cannot read the texts, this volume gives a glimpse of the spiritual elegance and grace that was to be found in the Ottoman tulip garden.
Catalogue
ŞEHİH HAMDULLAH
833/1429–926/1520

Şeyh Hamdullah was born in the north-central Anatolian town of Amasya. According to one source, his birth occurred in 833/1429; another source has it as 840/1436. To judge by the features of an undated Qur’an (now in the collection of the Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul) that we know he wrote at the age of eighty-nine, the first source is probably the more accurate. His father, Mustafa Dede, was a sheikh of the Sühreverdi order and a member of the Turkish community of Bukhara, in Central Asia, who had migrated to Amasya. Şeyh Hamdullah Efendi signed his works İbnî’s-Şeyh (Son of the Sheikh) or Hamdullah—never Şeyh (Sheikh) Hamdullah. (Şeyh Hamdullah was also an accomplished archer, and acquired his title as sheikh of the Atçular Tekkesi [marksmen’s lodge] then located in Ok Meydanı, the archers’ grounds reserved for this purpose after the conquest of Constantinople.)

In addition to studying the traditional curriculum in Amasya, he learned the six scripts there under the tutelage of Hayreddin Mar’aşî, a follower of the style of Yaque Al-Mustafa’simi (Yağa; d. 698/1298). Şeyh Hamdullah also studied the calligraphic works of Abdullah al-Sayrafî (active 14th century). When he was governor of Amasya, Bâyezid (1450–1512), son of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (r. 1451–81), befriended Şeyh Hamdullah and studied calligraphy with him. When the sultan died and Bâyezid succeeded to the throne in Istanbul in 886/1481, he invited his calligraphy master to the capital. Şeyh Hamdullah accepted the invitation and became master calligrapher at the Ottoman palace.

This was the beginning of a new phase in his artistic career. Sultan Bâyezid II esteemed his teacher so highly that he would hold the sheikh’s inkwell and put a pillow behind his back as he wrote. The sultan wished that Yağa’s style be developed and, for this purpose, gave Şeyh Hamdullah the most beautiful of Yağa’s works kept at the court so that he might study them carefully. This event probably took place in 890/1485. After careful scrutiny of these works, Şeyh Hamdullah was able to elaborate a style of his own; thereafter, he became known as the calligrapher’s lodestar (kistle’t’kîttâb).

Şeyh Hamdullah was a master of all six scripts. He spent the better portion of his life copying the Qur’an, producing forty-seven copies in all. He also produced a large number of Ename-i Şerffler (special collections of Qur’anic chapters), separate cizler of the Qur’an, collections of prayers, tomar scrolls, kütarlar, murakkala, collections of meşkler (exercises), and so forth.

He was also responsible for the inscriptions in the Bâyezid, Firuzaga, and Davud Pasa mosques in Istanbul, and in the Bâyezid Mosque in Edirne. Although these inscriptions illustrate his achievement in ceši sülüs, they are rather primitive in comparison with the ceši that was to appear after him.
beyne’s sütur (often referred to as cloud-cartouche) style of illumination. The gold frames (cedweller) were redrawn, and the üç pervaz between them was illuminated in the style of the period. The outer borders were decorated with a marbled paper called şal (shawl), which in turn was decorated with zer-eşgan, or flecks of gold ink or gold leaf. The outer borders of kit'alar are normally equal in width. The borders here, however, are not equal, probably because the pieces were adapted to fit a very fine şemse kap binding originally made for another purpose. It was the practice to decorate facing kit'alar in an album in an identical manner, as was done in this murakkaa.
It is impossible to say exactly how many students learned calligraphy from Şeyh Hamdullah, but the most prominent of his students were his son, Mustafa Dede (900/1495–945/1538), whom he named after his own father, and his son-in-law, Sükullullah Halife. Their children and grandchildren also learned the art and taught it to succeeding generations, thereby making Şeyh Hamdullah's family the most prolific in the number of master calligraphers it produced. Şeyh Hamdullah died toward the end of 926/1520 and was buried in the Karacaahmed Cemetery, in the Üsküdar quarter of Istanbul. Later calligraphers considered burial near his grave a great honor. They called the area around his grave Şeyh Sofası, or Hall of the Sheikh. Some novice calligraphers buried their pens for a week in the soil near his grave, hoping for a blessing from his spiritual power.

2. En'âm
Istanbul, 15th–early 16th century
Nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 19.2 × 12.9 cm (7¾ × 5¼ in.)
(283)

This work contains only the chapter of the Qur’an titled En’âm, or The Cattle (Qur’an 6:1–165). This chapter of the Qur’an is read in hope of receiving spiritual blessings and, in this case, was written, illuminated, and bound as a small separate book. A more common volume is the En’âm-i Serf (cat. no. 24).

In that format, the chapter En’âm comes first, followed by other frequently recited chapters of the Qur’an, such as Yāsîn (36); Rahman, or The Compassionate (55); and Mîlîk, or The Sovereignty (67).

This volume was written by Şeyh Hamdullah in nesih script, ten lines per page. Although the work is undated—Şeyh Hamdullah rarely dated his work—it was done after he developed his new style. Folios iv and 27 are shown here.

At court, Sultan Bâyezid II (r. 1481–1512) would seat Şeyh Hamdullah in the place of honor during discussions of religion, a sign of favor that rankled the learned theologians who were also present. At one such session, it is said, the sheikh displayed a Qur’an he had written, and the theologians expressed great admiration of it. After the meeting, as the scholars stacked their papers and books, the sultan asked where the Qur’an should be placed. “No book may ever be placed on top of the Qur’an,” said the theologians. “It must therefore be placed on top of our works.” Smiling, Bâyezid responded, “No one has revived the writing of the Qur’an as much as Şeyh Hamdullah. How, then, can I seat him in a place inferior to yours?” The theologians had no reply.
ŞEHZÂDE KORKUT
822/1467–919/1513

Ebu’l-Hayr Mehmed Korkut was born in Amasya, the son of then Prince Bâyezid (1450–1512) and the second of eight brothers. He was the most beloved grandchild of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (r. 1451–81), who saw to it that Prince Korkut received the most rigorous education in his palace. After Bâyezid became sultan in 1481, Prince Korkut intermittently held the governorship of Manisa, Antalya, and, again, Manisa between 1484 and 1512.

In the last days of his father’s reign, Prince Korkut wished to succeed him to the throne. In 1512, when his brother Prince Selim became Sultan Selim I, the Grim, Korkut would not oppose him and returned to Manisa as governor. Concerned about the possible fragmentation of the empire, Selim I (r. 1512–20) had his brother captured and strangled. He died on Muharrem 5, 919/March 13, 1513, and was buried next to the tomb of Sultan Orhan Gâzi (r. 1326–59), in Bursa.

Prince Korkut wrote six highly regarded works on religious subjects and, under the pen name Harîmî, a collection of poems. This talented prince also composed musical works and zealously promoted the development of Ottoman scholarship.

3. Qur’an
Istanbul?, late 15th century

 Nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 21.5 × 16.3 cm (8 1/4 × 6 1/4 in.)
(279)

Many members of the Ottoman dynasty were trained in the arts. A number of sultans, in fact, had a serious interest in poetry, music, and calligraphy. Şehzade (Prince) Korkut Çelebi wrote the Qur’an whose serlevha (illuminated opening spread; folios 1r and 2r) is shown here. The scion of a family that distinguished itself in science and culture, Prince Korkut studied calligraphy with Şeyh Hamdullah (see cat. nos. 1–2) while the sheikh still lived in Amasya. This Qur’an is the only known extant example of the prince’s work. It is written in an amateurish nesih script, thirteen lines per page, on 350 folios. Had Prince Korkut lived longer, he would undoubtedly have become one of Şeyh Hamdullah’s noted followers.

This undated Qur’an is a fine example of the art of Ottoman illumination in the late fifteenth century.
HÜSEYİN ŞAH
D. AFTER 965/1557

A native of Istanbul, Hüseyin Şah was always close to Şeyh Hamdullah (see cat. nos. 1–2) and received calligraphy training from him alongside the sheikh's own son, Mustafa Dede. The prayer handbook shown here provides evidence that Hüseyin Şah was Şeyh Hamdullah's slave. (Any discussion of slavery is problematic, but it is worth noting that most faithful Muslims tried to bring a measure of humanity to the practice.)

The child could already have been named Şah (Shah), implying kingship, when he was purchased, or Şeyh Hamdullah could have given Hüseyin the name Şah afterward. In any event, he took the child under his wing and raised him as an elder brother to his own son. He not only taught the boy his art but considered him to be his successor. (Other slaves also learned calligraphy from their masters. Two Caucasian slaves stand out: the sixteenth-century Hasan Çelebi, the slave of Ahmed Karahisârî [see cat. no. 6], and Mehmed Hâşim [d. 1261/1845], the slave of Mustafa Râkım [see cat. no. 27]. After being emancipated, both were adopted by their former owners and were taught calligraphy and became masters of the art.)

It is reported that when he liked a particular work by Hüseyin Şah, Şeyh Hamdullah would sign it with his own name, a mark of high esteem. After the sheikh's death, Hüseyin Şah was known as Hüsameddin Halîfe and wrote primarily in the nesih script. He lived a long life and died sometime after 965/1557. His burial place is unknown.

4. Prayer Handbook
Istanbul, before 926/1520
Nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 21.2 × 14.5 cm (8½ × 5¾ in.)
(561)

These are the last two pages, folios 5v and 6r, from a handbook of prayers written by Hüseyin Şah on six folios. This volume, with its format of eight lines per page, clearly shows how close Hüseyin Şah's nesih script was to that of his master, Şeyh Hamdullah.

Although the book is undated, it was apparently written before the death of Şeyh Hamdullah in 926/1520. It was common in practice (though not a matter of law) that the bond of slavery was broken on the death of the master. Hüseyin Şah indicates in the colophon, on folio 6r, that he was still a "slave of the sheikh," however, and there is no reference in the colophon to the death of Şeyh Hamdullah. Regarding his own name, Hüseyin Şah mentions in the colophon of a later work (965/1557) now in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum Library, Istanbul, that his father was Abdullah (slave of God). (Because slaves' lineages were not tracked, they were assigned a patronymic, frequently Abdullah.) Hüseyin Şah sometimes signed himself "son of Abdullah."
This fine Qur‘anic codex, or mushaf, was written in the style of Şeyh Hamdullah (see cat. nos. 1–2), probably by one of his students. It was copied in an excellent nesih script, thirteen lines per page, on 548 folios. The hâtime tezhibi (colophon illumination) and ketabe (signature), which occur at the end of the volume, have been cut out, perhaps by a thief years ago. With the hâtime missing, it is impossible to know whether the director of the illumination signed the work. (Because the illumination of most mushaflar was a joint effort by different artists, their individual signatures were not given; only the director signed.) Judging by the style of illumination of the serlevha (the two illuminated opening pages, folios 1v and 2r, shown here), this Qur‘an can be dated to the late days of the reign of Sultan Süleyman I, the Magnificent (or the Lawgiver, r. 1520–66).

In a serlevha, the entire text of the Fâtiha—the opening chapter of the Qur‘an—is written on the right-hand page (folio 1v). The first verses of the second chapter, Bakara (The Cow), are written on the left-hand page (folio 2r), following the layout of the Fâtiha: the number of lines and the dimensions of the writing space are identical. The top, bottom, and outside margins are illuminated, but not the gutter where the pages join. The color scheme of the two illuminated pages is the same; the design of the left is a mirror image of that of the right, making the two pages a unified whole. Although subsequent pages reserve larger areas for the text, their layout echoes that of the Fâtiha.

In this example, the design elements are very well balanced. The verse stops in the text portion of the serlevha are in the style called hâvalı or çift tahrib; empty areas are filled with leaf and branch motifs. The tağ motifs in the margins—lancelike floral and geometric designs alternating between the pages’ dominant lapis lazuli blue and gold—are in the same style. They emerge from golden balut (cloud) motifs that contain the text area. All the colors and designs serve to harmonize the sixteenth-century-style illumination with the cream-colored paper.

The rumili koltuk (rectangular area) on each side of the text space is painted on a gilded background. The designs in these areas can also be seen on Iznik tiles decorating the Salon of Sultan Murad III (r. 1574–95) at the Topkapı Sarayı, Istanbul.

On the other pages of this mushaf, the sûre başlari (chapter heads) and the aşere, huzib, and secede rosettes are executed in lapis and gold.
Ahmed Karahisârî was born in Afyon Karahisar, a west-central Anatolian city, but his exact date of birth is unknown. We do know, however, that he died in 963/1556, aged nearly ninety, so we can safely assume he was born a little before 875/1470. One report states that his first master was Yahyâ es-Sûfî (d. 882/1477), one of the calligraphers of the age of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (r. 1451–81), but the reliability of this report is suspect, for Ottoman sources regularly confuse this Yahyâ es-Sûfî with a later namesake. It is likely, however, that Karahisârî benefited from the calligraphic works of the earlier Yahyâ es-Sûfî. The master to whom Karahisârî always acknowledged apprenticeship, as he did in the Qur’an illustrated here, is Esedullah-i Kirmâni (d. 893/1488), but we do not know where he studied with him.

Karahisârî is known as the reviver in the Ottoman state of the style of Yaqût al-Mustasimî (Yaqût; d. 698/1298), thereby earning him the title of Yâkût-i Rûm, or the Yaqût of Asia Minor. There is a mushaf dating from the later years of his life which, in his own words, he “copied in imitation of Yaqût” in finely written nesîh. This style could not compete with Şeyh Hamdullah’s style (see cat. nos. 1–2), however, and so was abandoned by the following generation. We may say that Karahisârî’s style accomplished a double task: putting an end to Yaqût’s style and bringing three of the six scripts—sülüs, nesîh, and râkî—closer to the Ottoman taste. Only in celi sülüs was Karahisârî’s style more effective than that of the sheikh.

Karahisârî’s surviving works include Qur’ans, prayer handbooks, kut’alar, and murakkaalar. Although there are surviving celi works cut in marble and worked on tiles, these bear no signature, and it is impossible to tell whether they are by him or by his student Hasan Çelebi (d. after 1002/1594), whose method was identical. In addition to Hasan Çelebi, Karahisârî’s students Derviş Mehmed (d. 1000/1592), Ferhad Paşa (d. 982/1575), and Muhiddin Halife (d. 985/1575) are worthy of mention.

Karahisârî died in 963/1556. It is said that he copied the inscription for his gravestone himself, but the exact location of his grave, in the Sütülue quarter of Istanbul, is unknown.

6. Qur’an
Istanbul, 948/1541
Nesîh
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 19.6 × 12.8 cm (7½ × 4¾ in.)
(278)

Ahmed Karahisârî was about seventy when he copied this Qur’an, dated 948/1541. It is written in a small nesîh script, seventeen lines per page, which allowed him to complete the mushaf in only 256 folios.

This Qur’an is notable for its extremely fine example of the zahriye, or frontispiece. Islamic bound manuscripts always begin the text on the right-hand page (folio 1v). The back of the first page of text (folio 1r) is called the zahriye, from the Arabic word for “back,” zaht. This page can be left plain so that notations concerning the book or its owner can be added, or it can be illuminated. The financial resources of an Islamic state or dynasty would determine whether works prepared under its patronage would be finely illuminated with one, two, or more rarely, four zahriyeler. In a Qur’an, the zahriye could consist of a simple illumination, or it could include one or more Qur’anic verses worked into the design. The central element could be circular, elliptical, or shuttle-shaped. In works other than Qur’ans, the temellük kitâbesi (ownership inscription) could be on this page. In short—until the sixteenth century, when the practice fell out of use in the interest of economy—the zahriye gave illuminators an opportunity to create an artistic tour de force, independent from the calligraphy.

The double zahriye shown here includes a passage from Isra, or The
Night Journey (Qur'an 17:88): “Say: If all mankind and Jinns got together to produce the like of this Qur’an, they could never produce it, even if they supported each other to try.” The verse is written at the center of circular cartouches, on a gold background, in white-lead ink.

This magnificence is continued in the extraordinarily fine illumination of the suratul, hātim, and chapter headings of this mushaf.
Mustafa bin İbrahîm
Active 16th Century

7. Qur’an
959/1552
Nesih and rikâ’
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 31 x 20.5 cm (12 ⅞ x 7 ⅝ in.)
(545)

Nothing is known of Mustafa bin İbrahîm, who completed this Qur’an in Muharrem 959/January 1552, except that he was from Salonika (present-day Thessaloniki), as is indicated by his signing himself Selanikî. The mushaf has thirteen lines per page, on 356 folios. Written in an attractive nesih script, it gives the impression of having been copied quickly and easily. Compared to the double zahrîye in Karahisârî’s mushaf (cat. no. 6), the single zahrîye in this volume is quite uninspired: verses 77–89 of chapter 56 of the Qur’an are written within a circle, in a thickish rikâ’ script. The pages shown here—folios 137v and 138r—consist of verses 125–28 from chapter 16 through verses 1–10 of chapter 17.

The serlevha in this mushaf is rather heavily decorated with gold- and-lapis-lazuli-blue illumination that is of middling quality. The chapter headings are not illuminated; instead, the titles are written in rikâ’ script, in gold ink outlined in black. The ayere symbols are without illumination, and the durâklar (verse stops) are quite plain. The volume has been rebound.

It is not known where this mushaf was written.
Mahmud Efendi studied calligraphy with Selânikli Mustafa bin Nasuh, who had been a student of Şeyh Hamdullah's (see cat. nos. 1–2) while the sheikh still lived in Amasya. Mahmud Efendi's first employment was as a scribe at the religious court. Later, he was appointed kâdi (judge of Islamic law), first of Baghdad and then of Diyarıbekir. He died while in that post. Mahmud Efendi trained his son, Ahmed Paşa, in the calligraphic method of Şeyh Hamdullah. Ahmed Paşa served as a vezir, or minister of government, and as a beylerbeyi, or governor general. He died in 1020/1611.

8. Keâf
966/1559
Muhakkak, sütûs, and rikâ'
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 28 × 19.7 cm (10 3/8 × 7 3/4 in.)
(210)

This work by Kâdi Mahmud Efendi consists of only chapter 18 of the Qur'an, written on twenty folios. Both the ink and the variety of scripts are noteworthy. The pages shown here are folios 19v and 20r, which include the end of the chapter and the calligrapher's signature. The seven-line format is organized as follows: the first line is written in muhakkak script with blue ink; the following two lines are in sütûs script in black ink; next is one line of muhakkak in gold ink, two lines of sütûs in black ink, and, finally, one line of muhakkak in blue. In the triangular corner areas of the last page, the calligrapher extolled the virtues of the chapter—Keâf, or The Cave—in rikâ' script, using black ink. His signature appears in red (lâtî) ink in the lower part of the left triangle, along with the date 966/1559. All the scripts are smaller than customary, and the text areas are not framed with golden cedweller. In addition, instead of golden durâklar (verse-stop rosettes) between the verses, as was usual, there is simply a space.

Şeyh Hamdullah had abandoned the practice of writing Qur'ans using multiple scripts from the group known as the six scripts. Here, Mahmud Efendi used two of the six—sütûs and muhakkak—in alternating lines and in different colors, almost as a reminder of an earlier epoch.

It is not known where Mahmud Efendi wrote this work.
فتح الثقب الفجر نفك كشات
ريد الوجباء فنحنا لمدا فالغنا
دنوشلك ووجه الهلكة
واحد في القتا
نبرفي معك لاصحبا لبس
پعبادی بیه
احدا

صنعنا أولد الدير حفرت
تغمدا نفطمها ملعنة
لھم شروق
مکھروا آخذلو انوا سما
ازالبلانو ووجا وصلحا
لتحم
جلال الفدین
هالذین لا تمج
عنها حوا
 السل والאני مدک
یبی
Ramazan bîn İsmail
D. 1091/1680

Ramazan Efendi was the imam of a mosque in the neighborhood of the Mevlevî Sufî Lodge (Mevlevîhâne) in the Yenikapı district of Istanbul, a position he held for life. Aside from this work, he would allot a portion of each day to copying the Qur’an in nesîh script. It is reported that visitors to his house, even important personages such as the vezîr, would wait outside while he worked at this blessed occupation and that his house was always filled with people who came to do benevolent works.

A mushaf is composed of thirty cûzler, and Ramazan Efendi wrote half a cûz, or ten pages, every day. In this manner, he completed an entire volume in two months, and a total of four hundred copies of the Qur’an in his lifetime—certainly a record for his era. Although the date of his birth is not known, he must have lived a long life, for to write four hundred Qur’ans at his rate would have taken sixty-six years. Whenever he fell ill, he would request that his visitors—the calligraphers Dervîş Ali (see cat. no. 10), Suyolçuâdâ Mustafa (see cat. no. 12), and Hâfir Osman (see cat. nos. 14–16)—finish the works he had started but had not been able to complete before his illness.

Ramazan Efendi’s secer, or pedigree, in the art of calligraphy, like that of Dervîş Ali, reaches back to Şeyh Hamdullah (see cat. nos. 1–2). Ramazan Efendi’s teacher Abdullah bin Cezzar (d. 1074/1663) was the student of Imam Mehmed Tokâti (d. 1052/1642); Imam Mehmed Tokâti studied calligraphy with Hasan Üsküdârî (d. 1023/1614).

Hâfir Halîl Efendi (d. 1115/1703), Çiniczâde Abdurrahman Efendi (d. 1137/1725), and Seyyid Hasan Hâşimî Efendi (d. 1098/1687) were the best known of Ramazan Efendi’s students.

He died on Ramazan 27, 1091/October 21, 1680, and was buried outside the Yenikapı Mevlevî Sufî Lodge, which no longer exists. His son Dervîş İbrahim (d. 1131/1719) assumed his father’s position at the mosque. Dervîş İbrahim had learned calligraphy from his father and also worked at copying Qur’ans. When he died, he was buried in the same tomb as his father, inseparable in death as in life.

9. Qur’an
Istanbul, 1053/1643
Nesîh and rûkât
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 20.8 × 14.5 cm (8 ½ × 5 ⅛ in.)
(254)

This mushaf by Ramazan bin Ismail is written in nesîh script on 332 folios and is bound in its original yemse kap (sunburst-design) binding. There are thirteen lines per page. The text area is framed with a gilded cedvel, and the verses are separated by decorated duraklar (verse stops). The sûre başlarî are written in red ink in rûkât script, between lightly gilded endpieces. The pages shown here—folios 192v and 193r—are near the beginning of the nineteenth cûz (section), which is noted in the upper right-hand corner of the margin of folio 192v. The text on these pages is from chapter 25 of the Qur’an (Furkan, or The Criterion), beginning with the end of verse 20 and running through the beginning of verse 42. The serlevha in this mushaf, by an unknown artist, is a typical example of seventeenth-century illumination.

Ramazan Efendi had a quick and flowing way of writing. Throughout his life, he restricted himself to the nesîh script, which the Ottomans called the “servant of the Honorable Book” (that is, the Qur’an).
Derviş Ali

Derviş Ali was born in Istanbul. His pedigree in calligraphy begins with Şeyh Hamdullah (see cat. nos. 1–2) and includes Şükrullah Halife, Pir Mehmed bin Şükrullah (d. 988/1580), Hasan Üsküdarı (d. 1023/1614), and Derviş Ali’s teacher, Hâlid Erzurumî (d. after 1040/1631). Derviş Ali taught a number of apprentices, and copied more than sixty mushafılar. (A mushaf by him dated 1075/1664, his sixty-third, is in the Sakıp Sabancı Collection.) He also wrote a large number of Enâm-ı Şerifler (collections of Qur’anic chapters), kitâlar, and albums. Derviş Ali died, advanced in years, in Ramazan 1084/December 1673. The inscription on his tombstone (the location of which is now unknown) indicated that he was an excellent archer. He is called Derviş Ali the Great, or the First, to distinguish him from two later namesakes.

Derviş Ali taught the highly honored calligraphers Suyolcuzâde Mustafa Eyyûbî (see cat. no. 12), Ağakapılı İsmail bin Ali (see cat. no. 13), and Hâфиз Osman (see cat. nos. 14–16). Another of his students was Sadrazam (Grand Vezir) Köprülüzâde Fâzîl Ahmed Paşa (1635–1676), who, when he visited Derviş Ali, would kiss his hand in the manner reserved in Ottoman protocol for the şeyhülislâm, the highest religious authority in the empire. Since the state had an interest in calligraphy, and the men of state were connoisseurs of the art, calligraphers were highly regarded.

10. Murakkaa

Istanbul, 1075/1664

Sûlus, nesih, and rıkâ’

Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard

Each kit’â 20.5 × 21.5 cm (7½ × 8½ in.)

These two kit’âlar by Derviş Ali are from a six-kit’â körüklü murakkaa (bellow or accordion album). Each kit’â is square, save the final, signature kit’â, which is rectangular. (The top and bottom borders of this kit’â, shown here, have been widened to match the square format.) The format of the first five kit’âlar is one line in sülüs, two or three lines in nesih, one line in sülüs, and two or three in nesih. The final kit’â in the album is signed, under the line of sülüs and to the left, in rıkâ’ (icâzet) script. The költuk areas have been left unilluminated and the duraklar (stops) and inner and outer borders are not exceptional.
Nefeszâde Seyyîd İsmail Efendi
D. 1090/1679

Nefeszâde Seyyid İsmail Efendi was related to Nefeszâde Seyyid İbrahim Efendi (d. 1060/1650), who was the author of a very important source for historians of calligraphy, Gülzär-i savah (The Rose Garden of the Correct Way of Working). Like Derviş Ali (see cat. no. 10), he studied calligraphy with Hâlid Erzurumî (d. after 1040/1631). His pedigree reaches back to Şeyh Hamdüllah (see cat. nos. 1–2). During his lifetime, Seyyid İsmail Efendi was considered the unique representative of the sheikh’s method, and it is known that he taught the method to Hâfiz Osman (see cat. nos. 14–16), who became a master of it.

We know that Seyyid İsmail Efendi was large in stature. According to Müstakîmzâde’s Tuhfe-i hattâtîn (The Rare and Valuable Lives of the Calligraphers), “If he were not such a fat-bellied man and could easily have held his writing pad on his knee, it would have been impossible to distinguish his writing from that of Şeyh Hamdüllah.”

Seyyid İsmail Efendi died in 1090/1679. The location of his grave is unknown.

11. Qur’ân
Istanbul, 1175/1664
Nesîh
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 21.4 × 15 cm (8 1/4 × 6 in.)
(261)

Nefeszâde Seyyid İsmail Efendi followed the method of Şeyh Hamdüllah when he wrote this fine Qur’an in 1075/1664, 160 years after the sheikh’s heyday. It is written in nesîh script, thirteen lines per page. The binding and illumination are original. The chapter titles are written, within the chapter-head illuminations, in white-lead ink on a gilded background. The pages shown are folios 375v and 376r, with the final two verses of chapter 87 (Âlî, or The Most High), all of chapter 88 (Gâşîye, or The Calamity), and most of chapter 89 (Fecr, or The Dawn).

In the Islamic tradition, the first word of a bound-manuscript page is written in the lower left-hand corner of the preceding page, as is shown here, to ease the transition to the following page (see also cat. nos. 8–9, 15–16, 20, 22, 30–31, 42, and 45). The purpose of this repeated word was twofold: it helped prevent confusion and lost time during recitation of the Qur’an; and, because it was not the custom to number the pages of manuscripts, it made collation of the pages for binding foolproof. In Turkish, this repeated word is known as the müşîr (pointer), rakîb (watchman), or çoban (shepherd).
Suyolcuzâde Mustafa Eyyûbî
1028/1619–1097/1686

Suyolcuzâde Mustafa was born in the Eyüb district of Istanbul and thus acquired the name Eyyûbî. The name Suyolcuzâde means “son (zâde) of the suyolcu,” or of the man in charge of maintaining the city’s water conduits. Suyolcuzâde began his studies with a calligrapher known as Dede and, upon Dede’s death, became a student of Derviş Ali’s (see cat. no. 10). After receiving his icazet, Suyolcuzâde devoted his life to calligraphy and teaching. His best-known students were Hocazâde Mehemd (d. 1106/1695), Câbiâde Abdullah (d. 1149/1736), and Hâfiz Osman (see cat. nos. 14–16), with whom Suyolcuzâde had an especially close relationship.

Hâfiz Osman would walk all the way from his home in the Haseki quarter of Istanbul to Eyüb—a distance of some four miles—to take his lessons from Mustafa Efendi, then walk all the way back. He even walked barefoot to his lesson one snowy winter day, which endeared him to Suyolcuzâde. It is said that once, when Hâfiz Osman had become a great master in his own right, he attended a gathering at which his former master was present. When the grand vezir asked with whom he had studied, Hâfiz Osman turned toward Suyolcuzâde and said, “I am a graduate of His Excellency.” Mustafa Efendi was so deeply moved by these words that, as they were leaving, he kissed Hâfiz Osman on the forehead and, with tears in his eyes, bade him good wishes.

Suyolcuzâde wrote more than fifty mushtaflar and many Enâm-i Şerîfler, evrâdlar (collections of personal prayers), and murakkaalar. He died in 1097/1686 and was buried in the Hamamarkasî Cemetery, in the Eyüb district where he had passed his whole life. His grandson, Suyolcuzâde Mehemd Necib (d. 1137/1725), was the author of a collection of biographies of calligraphers, Devhatîl-kütûb (The Genealogical Tree of Calligraphers). He also copied the epitaph for his grandfather’s gravestone, which was eventually broken and is now in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, Istanbul. The exact location of Suyolcuzâde’s grave is unknown.

12. Ku’â
Istanbul, 17th century
Sülüs and nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
14.1 × 22.4 cm (5½ × 8¾ in.)
(151)

This undated ku’â, with one line of sülüs and two of nesih, appears to have been written extremely quickly. These well-balanced and mature lines seem almost to have gushed spontaneously from the writer’s pen. When Sâmi Efendi (see cat. nos. 49–52) saw this work, he said, “It is my conviction that Hâfiz Osman did not become Hâfiz Osman until he met Suyolcuzâde.”

The signature of the calligrapher is written in angled lines in the left koluk. The illumination was done at a later date.
اسْتَغْفِرْ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ السَّاحِرُ
Born in Istanbul, İsmail Efendi was known as Ağakapılı because he taught at the Janissary officers’ school in Ağakapılı (now the site of the mufti’s office in the Süleymaniye quarter). Although he did not do so on the kut’a shown here, Ağakapılı usually signed himself İsmail bin Ali (son of Ali). An outstanding student of Derviş Ali’s (see cat. no. 10), he trained many calligraphers himself. He was one of the last calligraphers to be able to trace his artistic pedigree directly back to Şeyh Hamdullah (see cat. nos. 1–2). The sheikh’s method was soon to become obsolete, however, and although Ağakapılı was Hâfiz Osman’s contemporary, he did not follow Osman’s new treatment of the six scripts (see cat. nos. 14–16). Nevertheless, Ağakapılı greatly admired Hâfiz Osman and said of him, “We knew calligraphy, but Hâfiz Osman wrote it.” After Ağakapılı’s death, his writing chest was found to contain a number of fine kut’alar by Hâfiz Osman.

Ağakapılı wrote more than forty Qur’ans and many Enâmlar, aklâm-i sitte kut’alar, and albums, which were greatly admired. When he reached the age of eighty, his hand began to tremble. Nevertheless, in his old age, he executed inscriptions in the cell süsüs script of the period for the Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi medrese (Islamic theological school) and its library (now the State Library), in Istanbul. These inscriptions are still extant.

The epitaph for the grave of Hâfiz Osman, which was in the hazine (enclosed burial precinct) of the Sünbül Efendi Sufi Lodge, Istanbul, was Ağakapılı’s work. He died eight years after completing this epitaph, and was buried in the Kasımpaşa district’s Darderesi Cemetery, which no longer exists. The epitaph he copied for Hâfiz Osman was copied on his own gravestone as well, with Ağakapılı’s name substituted for Hâfiz Osman’s.

İkinci (the Second) Derviş Ali (d. 1128/1716), who is not represented in this catalogue, studied with Ağakapılı İsmail and Hâfiz Osman. He appears in the genealogy of calligraphers (see the appendix to this volume) as a point of transmission between these masters and later generations.

15. Kut’a
Cenkâr, 17th century
Süsüs and nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
14.2 x 23.1 cm (5 3/8 x 9 in.)

This is the final kut’a of a sequential album (müteselsil murakkab) of 131 kut’alar. Ağakapılı İsmail Efendi signed the piece simply “İsmail.” Written immediately after the signature is a device that indicates that the work has been proofread. The signature also states that the writing was done in Cenkâr, a village on the Anatolian shore of the Bosphorus opposite from where Ağakapılı lived. (Today, Cenkâr is called Çengelköy and is a district of Istanbul.) This kut’a is testimony that, even while the calligrapher was traveling, the pen never left his hands.

The text of the kut’a is a hadis, or saying of the Prophet: “I was sent only to perfect nobility of character in people.”
بعثهم كلامًا للأخلاق
Hâfiz Osman was born in Istanbul in 1052/1642. His father, Ali Efendi, was the muezzin of the Haseki Sultan Mosque. The young Osman zealously memorized the Qur’an, achieving the title hâfiz. (This title, which means “one who memorizes the Qur’an,” was used as a first name by those who earned it.) His family was very poor, and he was educated under the patronage of Fâzîl Mustafa Paşa (1638–1691), of the illustrious Köprülü family. His first calligraphy teacher was Derviș Ali (see cat. no. 10), who, believing he was too old to provide the quality of teaching the talented young man deserved, eventually sent him to his own student Suyolcuzađe Mustafa Eyyûbi (see cat. no. 12), whom he considered most distinguished. Hâfiz Osman received his icâzet from Suyolcuzađe in 1070/1660, at the age of eighteen.

As can be seen from his early works done under the tutelage of Derviș Ali, Hâfiz Osman initially followed the method of Şeyh Hamdullah (see cat. nos. 1–2). To perfect this style, he felt the need to begin his apprenticeship again as the student of Nefeszâde Seyyid İsmail Efendi (see cat. no. 11). So successful at the sheikh’s method was Hâfiz Osman that, years later, his works became a major source for understanding the style of Şeyh Hamdullah in the six scripts. After finishing his studies with Nefeszâde, Hâfiz Osman began a direct study of the sheikh’s original works, increasing his skill by using the taktilîd method of imitation (for a description of this method, see the entry for catalogue number 33).

In 1090/1679, however, Hâfiz Osman abandoned the sheikh’s method and developed his own style. Just as Şeyh Hamdullah, in his day, originated a style by building on the works of Yâqût al-Musta’sî (Yâqût; d. 698/1298), so Hâfiz Osman sifted and purified Ottoman calligraphy, reaching a new stage in the development of the art characterized by a greater refinement in the letter shapes and, in general, a less cramped, livelier line. Although at first this new method encountered criticism as well as envy, it was accepted in a short time, and the sheikh’s style was abandoned. A further development occurred about 1100/1689, when Hâfiz Osman began to reduce the size of his nesîh script. Connoisseurs believe his best work in nesîh was that done between 1090 and 1100.

In 1106/1695, Hâfiz Osman was appointed calligraphy teacher to Sultan Mustafa II (r. 1695–1703) and his son, the future sultan Ahmed III. While in the sultan’s presence, Hâfiz Osman was seated on a special sofa as a mark of respect. Moreover, while Hâfiz Osman was preparing the sultan’s meşk (lesson), the sultan would honor him by holding his inkwell. These favors did not spoil Hâfiz Osman, in whom asceticism and humility were lifelong traits. One day, during a lesson, the sultan is reported to have exclaimed admiringly, “There will never be another Hâfiz Osman Efendi!” Hâfiz Osman replied, “My sovereign, as long as sultans like you hold the inkwell for their teacher, there will be many Hâfiz Osmans.”

14. Murâkkâa
Istanbul, 1080/1669
Sülüs and muhakkak
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
Each kutû 28.5 x 19.7 cm (11 3/8 x 7 1/4 in.)
(345)

This eleven-folio collection was written by Hâfiz Osman in 1080/1669, when he was still a young man. In this album, only the besmele, the first line of the right-hand folio shown here, is written in muhakkak. The rest is in sülüs script, five lines per page.

The original borders of this work were replaced a century later using ebrû (marbled paper) made by Hatib Mehmed Efendi (d. 1187/1773; see cat. no. 1). This type of ebrû is called hatîb ebrûsû in honor of its inventor. It is made by floating a background color on the tragacanth bath described on page 22, releasing drops of another color onto the background, and then applying still other colors on top of these drops, making concentric circles of pigment. A stylus is then drawn through the colors to create the design.

The borders were restored following a method that is still in use today: the original borders of the kutûa are cut off. Two pieces of ebrû are put back to back, marbled sides out. A window is cut through both papers, just a bit smaller than the text area of the kutûa, in order to leave a slight overlap. The kutûa is then pasted between the two sheets of ebrû and the assemblage is dried under pressure. The same procedure is used for all the folios in the album. The new border is called the vassâde. (The original process for applying a vassâde—in the restoration of a mushaf—is described in the entry for catalogue number 20.)
لا يوجد نص يمكن قراءته بشكل طبيعي من الصورة المقدمة.
Because Hâfiz Osman held no government office, he was free to travel. He often visited Bursa and Edirne, in Turkey, and he went to Egypt in 1685/1672 and to the Hijaz in 1687–88/1676–77 to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Whenever he traveled, he continued to practice calligraphy, noting in his signature where he was when he wrote a particular piece. The signatures on his works attest to the many stops along the way at which he wrote karalama lar or küzler.

Over his forty-year artistic career, Hâfiz Osman worked continuously. He made twenty-five copies of the Qur’an, among them the charming mushaf in this volume (cat. no. 15). Hâfiz Osman also wrote innumerable En’am lar, küzler, ku’alar, and murakkaalar using the six scripts. While there are no references to Hâfiz Osman’s composing poetry, he generally took great care to write the colophons for his works in rhyming Arabic prose.

Although Hâfiz Osman’s celi sülüs was not up to the level of his other scripts, it is worth noting that Mustafa Râkim (see cat. no. 27), who was to make the great revolution in celi sülüs a century later, took his inspiration from Hâfiz Osman’s regular-size sülüs. Hâfiz Osman is also remembered for developing the hiley-i saadet from an Arabic text to the levha format we know today. It was also he who established for the prayer book Delâîl-ı Hayrât the layout that is now universally followed.

As a teacher, Hâfiz Osman was scrupulous in adhering to the custom of charging nothing for lessons. He would teach the poor at his home on Sundays and the children of the well-to-do on Wednesdays. It is said that, after finishing a lesson, he would often go out on his horse and come across a student who had been delayed and missed the session. Instead of upbraiding the student, Hâfiz Osman would get off his horse and give the student a lesson at the side of the road. He is known to have had at least fifty students, the best-known of whom include Yedikuleli Seyyid Abdullah (see cat. nos. 17–18), Yusuf Rûmi (d. 1121/1709), Rodosizâde Abdullah (d. 1116/1704), Yusuf Mecidi (d. 1133/1721), and Mehmed Giridi (d. 1165/1753).

A few years before he died, Hâfiz Osman suffered a slight stroke but recovered enough that the quality of his late works did not deteriorate. He died three hundred years ago, in his home, on Cemâzîlûlâ 29, 1110/December 3, 1698. He was interred in the cemetery of the Sünbü l Efendi Sufi Lodge, Istanbul. Ağakapılı İsmail Efendi (see cat. no. 13) copied the epitaph for his gravestone, which still stands.

The path that Hâfiz Osman opened in the sülüs, nesih, and rikâ’ scripts has since branched in other directions but is still valid today.

15. Qur’an
Istanbul, 1682
Nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 18.2 x 12.7 cm (7½ x 4½ in.)

This Qur’an clearly displays Hâfiz Osman’s special style of writing. Shown here are folios 482v and 483, comprising the end of chapter 94 (Inşirâh, or The Expanding), all of 95 (Tin, or The Fig), and all of 96 (Alak, or The Clot). The mushaf was finished in the last days of Ramazan 1682. The perfectly realized nesih script is written eleven lines per page on 470 folios. An artist named Hasan bin Mustafa decorated the mushaf. The serlevha and sûre başlari, and the ciz, durak, and aşere rosettes, are very elegant and appropriate to the calligraphy. It is possible that the fine şemse kap binding is also the work of Hasan bin Mustafa. (Very little is known about Hasan bin Mustafa, except that he was raised by Beyâzî Mustafa and was the student of Sûrâhi Mustafa. Two other illuminators are known to have decorated Hâfiz Osman’s works: Hâfiz Mehmed Çelebi and Ahdeb Hasan Çelebi, also known as Kanbur Hasan Çelebi [both Ahdeb and Kanbur mean “Hunchback.”])

Hâfiz Osman is said to have received about 350 kurus (piasters) for each of the three mushaflar he wrote between 1080/1669 and 1088/1677. That would equal approximately twenty ounces of gold, or almost six thousand dollars in today’s currency.

In 1687, after five years of preparation, a facsimile edition of this Qur’an was printed by the Doğan Kardeş Institution, Istanbul.
سورة البقرة

فَأَمَّا ضَلَّلَ الْأَنْしَءَ فَعَلَّهُ اَلْلَّهُ ۚ وَإِنَّمَا يُعِيدُ الْأَمْرَ ۚ وَيَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا ۚ فَلَوْ دُعِيَ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَقَدْ أَكَثَرَهَا ۚ بَلِ الْأَمْرُ لَهُ وَسَيَسْتَغْلِبُهُ ۚ وَيُنْفِقُونَ مِنْ أَمْوَاتِهِمْ ۚ فَلَا يُذْهَبْ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ ۚ وَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۙ وَيَقْتُلُونَ أَشْرَقَى َۡا أَشْرَقَى ۚ فَلَا يُذْهَبْ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ ۚ وَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۙ
16. 

En'ām

Istanbul, 1095/1684.

Nesih

Ink, colors, and gold on paper

Binding 18.2 x 12.3 cm (7 ¼ x 4 ¾ in.)

Hâfiz Osman was at the height of his artistic powers when he wrote this copy of the chapter En'ām, or The Cattle (Qur'an 6:1–165) in nesih script in 1095/1684. This often-recited chapter was written ten lines per page on twenty-three folios; shown here are folios iv and 2r. As is the custom in an En'ām volume, only the right-hand opening page has been illuminated. It is called the unvan sahifesi and is an unpretentious and charming example of the illuminator’s art. The binding is stamped with şemsiye motifs. In its simplicity and elegance, this book gives us a hint of the nobility of the age of Hâfiz Osman.
لا يمكنني قراءة النص العربي من الصورة المقدمة.
Abdullah Efendi was born in the Yedikule district of Istanbul in 1081/1670 and is therefore known by the appellation Yedikuleli. Because he was descended from the Prophet Muhammad on both parents' side, he signed himself seyyid (sayyid). He is also called emir. His father, Seyyid Hasan Hâşiî (d. 1098/1687); his son, Seyyid Abdülhalim Hasib (1117/1705–1172/1759); and his grandson, Seyyid Mehmed Said (1152/1739–1172/1758), shared his occupation, making four generations of calligraphers in the family.

Abdullah Efendi's father was the imam of the İmrahıır (Mîrâhûr) Mosque in Yedikule. The young Abdullah memorized the Qur'an, completed his education, and began his study of calligraphy with his father. At the age of seventeen, he began to practice the six scripts with Hâfiz Osman (see cat. nos. 14–16) and received his icâzet in just forty months, winning the appreciation of his teacher. When his father died, Abdullah Efendi became the imam of the İmrahıır Mosque, a post he held until the end of his life. He copied twenty-four mushafîlar, about a thousand Enâmîlar and evrâdlar (collections of personal prayers), countless kutâlar, albums, hilyeler, and books, in addition to teaching calligraphy to many students. Among the best-known were Eşrikapılı Mehmed Râsim Efendi (see cat. no. 19) and Şekerzâde Mehmed Efendi (see cat. no. 21).

In 1120/1708, Sultan Ahmed III (r. 1703–30) appointed Abdullah Efendi to be the meşk teacher at the Topkapı Sarayı, where he was always received with affection. One day, the story goes, the sultan heard of the high quality of the ink made by Abdullah Efendi. The sultan immediately sent an imperial halberdier to the calligrapher to obtain a sample. The halberdier took the inkwell Abdullah Efendi was using and brought it to the sultan, who drained the ink and filled the inkwell with gold. The inkwell was returned to the calligrapher along with other presents.

Yedikuleli Seyyid Abdullah Efendi was the most outstanding student of Hâfiz Osman, especially in the nesîh script, in which he was a master—so much so, in fact, that once, in introducing his student, Hâfiz Osman is reported to have said, “He writes more beautifully than I.”

Abdullah Efendi died on Rabi 8, 1144/September 10, 1731. He was buried in the cemetery facing the Şâh Sultan Lodge, in the Eyübi district of Istanbul.

17. Hilye
Istanbul, 1116/1668
Celi muhammâk, sülüs, and nesîh
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on board
58 x 41.5 cm (22 3/8 x 16 1/4 in.) (91)

This hilye-i saađet was written by Abdullah Efendi in a form that departs from Hâfiz Osman’s model. The besmele is written in celi muhammâk.

Two Qur’anic verses are written in sülüs: “And We [God] did not send you [Muhammad] except to be a mercy to the universe” (Qur’an 21:107), beneath the besmele; “And We [God] did not send you [Muhammad] except to be a bringer of good news, and a warner” (Qur’an 25:56), beneath the hitâl (crescent). Below the second verse are the customary names of the Seven Sleepers and their dog; their story is found in Khafî, or The Cave (Qur’an 18:9–27). Directly above the hitâl, God’s name and the Prophet’s name are written in sülüs. Surrounding the crescent, also in sülüs, are the names of the so-called Ten Who Were Promised Paradise, including the four successors of the Prophet, or the Four Friends. To the right of the hilye proper is a column containing the ninety-nine names of God, and to the left is a column listing names that describe the Prophet. The illumination of the piece is typical of the period.

As was the practice at the time, this hilye was originally pasted onto a wooden panel and hung on a wall, illuminated by an oil lamp. Because it was not protected by glass, the paper darkened, and woodworms riddled the panel with holes.
18. *Murakkaa*

Istanbul, late 17th–18th century

*Nesih*

Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard

Each *kus'at* $20 \times 24.1$ cm ($7\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

(215)

In Ottoman calligraphy, a *meşk* (teaching exercise) generally combined *sülüs* and *nesih* scripts (see cat. no. 41), while *ta'liq* was usually studied separately (see cat. nos. 28, 29, 55, and 55). In this album, Abdullah Efendi has written four *müfredât* *külaları* and one *mürekkebât* *kus'ät* in *nesih* script only. (For an explanation of the terms *müfredât* and *mürekkebât*, see catalogue numbers 28 and 41.) In this undated *körikti* *murakkaa* (accordion album), Yedikuleli has produced a *nesih* perfectly in accord with that of his teacher Hâfiz Osman (see cat. nos. 14–16).
Eğrikapili Mehmed Râsim Efendi
1099/1688–1169/1756

Because Mehmed Râsim Efendi was born in the Eğrikapı district of Istanbul, he was known as Eğrikapılı. His father, Yusuf Efendi (d. 1142/1729), who was also a calligrapher, was the imam of the Molla Aşkî section of the same district. Early in his career, Mehmed Efendi signed himself Imamzade (Son of the Imam) Mehmed, but this appellation was not specific enough and led to confusion. After the age of forty, he used the signature Mehmed Râsim (râsim means “artist”), a fact that is useful in dating the kitâb shown here. He began to learn the six scripts with his father, then continued his studies with Yedikuleli Seyyid Abdullah Efendi (see cat. nos. 17–18), the favorite pupil of Hâfiz Osman (see cat. nos. 14–16). Mehmed Râsim received his icâzet in 1117/1705.

Educated in religion and literature, Mehmed Râsim Efendi was a specialist in insâ (the art of composing elegant correspondence) and left many works of poetry. He was appointed calligraphy teacher at the Galata Sarayi in 1126/1714 and then named to the same post at the Topkapı Sarayi in 1150/1737. He died on Şâb’an 14, 1169/May 13, 1756, and was interred in the cemetery just outside the Eğrikapı district. His student Mestîçâde Ahmed Efendi (d. 1174/1761) copied the epitaph for the gravestone, which still stands today.

In the course of his two official appointments, Mehmed Râsim Efendi is said to have trained approximately a thousand calligraphers. He was Yedikuleli Abdullah Efendi’s finest student. Once, a mushaf was commissioned from Abdullah Efendi when he was short of time. He had Mehmed Râsim Efendi write it but signed his own name to it, then gave his student the entire payment for the work.

Mehmed Râsim Efendi wrote sixty mushâfars and many Enâm-i Şerifler, kat’alar, murakkaalar, and hitâyeler. He also wrote a number of inscriptions in celli sülüs, the best-known of which appear on the Sâliha Sultan Fountain, in Istanbul’s Azapkapı quarter. (These inscriptions, it should be noted, were written in a pre-Râsim celli style.) He also wrote ta’liq, which he learned from the master at that time, Hekimbaşi Kâtîpâde Mehmed Refi’ Efendi (d. 1183/1769). He earned his icâzet in this script at the age of fifty-two. In a rare turnabout, he taught sülüs and nesih to his ta’liq teacher and gave him an icâzet for these scripts.

19. Kitâb
Istanbul, after 1159/1727
Sülüs and nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
16.6 x 24.5 cm (6⅞ x 9½ in.)

(154)

This sülüs-and-nesih kitâb was signed simply Mehmed Râsim. From the style of the floral illumination and of the ebrî paper used on the borders, the piece can be dated to shortly after 1159/1727.

The text reads: “Be sagacious, generous, and a keeper of secrets.”
Hāfiz Yahya Fahreddin was nicknamed Sari, or Yellow, apparently because of his hair color or complexion. The son of a man named Osman, he was from the Tophâne quarter of Istanbul. The story goes that one day, while he was tending the grave of the calligrapher Demircikulu Yusuf Efendi (d. 1620/1611), in front of the Karabaş Sufi Lodge in Tophâne, he found a reed pen buried in the ground near the grave. This sparked a desire in him to learn calligraphy, and he began studying with İkinci Derviş Ali (d. 1128/1716). When his teacher died, he continued his studies with the teacher’s son-in-law and student, Hüseyn Habîl (d. 1157/1744). Masters such as Yeşikuleli (see cat. nos. 17–18) and Eğrikapîli (see cat. no. 19) were among the calligraphers who formed the jury during his icâzet ceremony in 1155/1743. One of the other calligraphers in attendance, Abdullah Vefâ (d. 1144/1739), claimed that Yahya Fahreddin’s teacher had written the icâzet kitâbî, whereupon Yahya Efendi began to write a new kitâbî in front of the masters. Yeşikuleli Abdullah Efendi dismissed Vefâ from the jury with the mocking words, “See here, sir. Can’t you distinguish the calligraphy of a master from that of a student?”

In addition to writing fifteen Qur’ans, Yahya Fahreddin Efendi wrote some very fine murakkaalar in sülüs and nesih. He took particular pains with the hareke (vowel signs) and other reading aids, writing them beautifully. In addition, using pre-Râkm celi sülüs, he wrote inscriptions for the Ātif Efendi Library, in Istanbul’s Vefa district, and for the Imperial Arsenal of Ordnance and Artillery. Laying out architectural inscriptions takes a good deal of space, and while Yahya Fahreddin Efendi was working on inscriptions for the interior of the Nurusosmaniye Mosque, he said he needed a house with a very large hall—big enough to shoot a cannon in. Yirmisekiz Çelebizade Mehmed Said Paşa (1701–1761) was moved by this remark, and, as soon as he became grand vezir in 1755, purchased a mansion for Yahya Fahreddin. The calligrapher was able to write only two inscriptions in his new home, however, before he died, in Recep 1169/April 1756. He was buried in the cemetery opposite the Şeyh Murad Lodge, in the Eyüp quarter. The location of his grave is no longer known.

20. Qur’an
Istanbul, 1157/1744

Nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 18.5 × 12 cm (7\% × 4\% in.)

Shown here are folios 596v and 597r from a Qur’an written in 1157/1744. This mushaf was copied thirteen lines per page on 402 folios. On folio 402r, Yahya Fahreddin signed his name and stated that Hüseyn Habîl bin Ramazan was his teacher. The illuminator, one Mustafa, wrote his name in a golden durak rosette in the lower left-hand corner of the same page. (An eighteenth-century illuminator from Bursa, Mustafa Efendi went by the patronymic Tuzpazari İmam.) In this volume, the duraklar are plain, in contrast to the serlevha illumination, which was executed in the flowery and colorful style, new at that time, called Turkish Rococo. The chapter heads are similarly illuminated, with the chapter titles written in white-lead ink. The margins of each page are decorated with zer-efsan (bleeds of gold ink or gold leaf).

The manuscript has been restored and the margins replaced by the vassâle method. Over time, the margins of manuscript pages become worn from handling, especially at the lower outside corners. The craftsman who restored these margins was called a vassâl; his craft, vassâlecilik. Briefly, the process is as follows: the text area of each page is carefully cut from its margins, and the four edges of the text area are thinned (by beating with a special hammer) and beveled. The paper that will form the new border is cut to conform to the size of the book and folded in the middle to form the
gutter, which will be bound to the spine of the book. The text pieces are then placed, in the proper order, on the new pages, which are marked and in which windows the size of the text areas are cut. On each page, the inner edges of the window are beaten with the hammer to thin and expand the paper a bit, so that it will overlap the text area slightly. The text piece is lightly edged with glue, put in place, and pasted down. When the pages are dry, the seams are pounded lightly with the hammer to smooth them, so that the bound volume will not be too thick. A golden cedel (frame) is then drawn over the seams to hide them. Only careful examination will reveal that the manuscript has been restored. When the process is complete, the double-folio sheets are collated into cüzler (one-thirtieth parts of the Qur’an), pierced, sewn, and bound. (For another use of the vassâle process, see the entry for catalogue number 14.)

This Qur’an was probably restored in the nineteenth century.
Mehmed Efendi was the son of Abdurrahman Efendi, a confectioner (şekerçi) in the western Anatolian city of Manisa, where the calligrapher was born. Instead of calling himself Şekercizâde, or Son of the Confectioner, Mehmed Efendi shortened the name to Şekerczâde (Son of Sugar). Indeed, it is tempting to say he deserved the name, so sweet and cheerful is his work.

Şekerczâde studied calligraphy with İbrahim Kırımı (d. 1150/1737) before moving to Istanbul, where he studied with Yedikuleli Abdullah Efendi (see cat. nos. 17–18). He wrote Qur'ans, kut'âlar, and murakkâalar and was an expert at taklîd, the imitation of the work of other calligraphers. With the encouragement of Sultan Ahmed III (r. 1703–30), he spent several years in Medina, copying the mushaf donated to the mosque adjoining the tomb of the Prophet. When he returned to Istanbul, Sultan Mahmud I (r. 1730–54) had ascended to the throne, and Şekerczâde presented the copy to him. It is now kept in the Süleymaniye Library (Yeni Cami k.5), Istanbul. A facsimile was issued in 1291/1874, the first officially printed mushaf in Ottoman history.

Şekerczâde also taught calligraphy to those employed in the private gardens of the Topkapı Sarayi, and gave calligraphy lessons in his own house in the Ayasofya quarter of Istanbul. He died in Cemâziyelevvel 1166/March 1753 and, like many other calligraphers, was buried near the grave of Şeyh Hamdullah, in the Karacaahmed Cemetery in the Üsküdar quarter.

21. Murakkâa
Istanbul, 1158/1745
Sülüs and nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
Binding 28.3 x 20.8 cm (11 x 8½ in.)
(208)

Şekerczâde Mehmed Efendi wrote this twelve-kıta düz murakkâa, or album arranged to open like a book, in sülüs and nesih. Because this is a sequential album, the signature and date (1158/1745) occur only on the final kıta. In each kıta, the top and bottom lines are in sülüs, with three shorter lines of nesih in between, leaving space for an illuminated koltuk on either side. This work and others testify that Şekerczâde, like his contemporaries, followed the method of Hâfiz Osman (see cat. nos. 14–16).

The decoration of this album was done at the time it was written. The outer borders are of kumlu ebrû (sand-patterned marbled paper), articulated with simple gold motifs.
22. *Vakfiye*
Istanbul, 1169/1756

*Nesih*
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 30.7 x 19 cm (11 3/8 x 7 3/8 in.)

(541)

Charitable foundations called *vakıflar* existed in many Islamic nations, each of which molded the concept according to its customs and understanding of Islam. The Ottomans developed *vakıflar* into lasting institutions. A *vakıf* consisted of the property of a person or group of persons that had been dedicated to a purpose pleasing to God and that could not be transferred to another use. The *vakıf* transformed personal property into collective property that brought great benefit to the common people. Many social services were delivered to Ottoman subjects in this way, and many religious, architectural, cultural, and artistic works were supported by *vakıflar*. The *vakıf* was self-supporting, generating income in perpetuity.

The *vakıf* is the official document that stipulates the purpose of a particular *vakıf*, its financial worth, its income and expenses, its administrators (*mütevelliüler*), and its donor (*vakıf*). Such documents assured the administrative and financial autonomy of the *vakıf*. These documents generally include praise for the donor, as well as Qur’anic verses, hadisler, or sayings that describe the consequences of altering the terms of the *vakıf*. This section is usually written in Arabic. Following it, in Turkish, are the conditions concerning the establishment of the *vakıf*. Finally, the donor and a kâdis (judge of religious law) sign the document in the presence of witnesses, thereby putting it in force.

The donor could have the document written in calligraphy, then illuminated and bound. The *unsan sahifesi* (opening page; folio iv) of such a *vakıf* is shown here. This book is a complete *vakıf*ye, written in a large *nesih* script, on sixteen folios. It stipulates that Haci Ahmed Ağa, one of the palace eunuchs at the time of Sultan Osman III (r. 1754-57), has set up a *vakıf* to secure the perpetual support of a school and *sebil* (public water fountain) that he established in Cairo, which was then a part of the Ottoman Empire. One condition reads: “Every year, may ten thousand paralar [a unit of coinage] be allotted to transport, during the summer, delicious water from the blessed Nile River to the aforementioned public water fountain.” The names of nine witnesses are written at the end of the document, which is dated Şevval 18, 1169/July 16, 1756. The calligrapher and illuminator are unknown, as it was not customary to sign these works.
Born in the west-central Anatolian city of Kütahya, Mustafa Kütâhî was the nephew of a sheikh and liked to be called Şeyhzâde (Son of the Sheikh). After receiving his education, he became a teacher in Istanbul, where he studied calligraphy with İbrahim Rodosî (d. 1201/1787). Although the date of his death cannot be established for certain, Mustafa Kütâhî was clearly still alive in 1201/1787, for a levha he wrote bears that date. He also wrote a number of sülüs-and nesih kut‘alar and celti sülüs levhalar. He was buried in the Karacaahmed Cemetery, in the Üsküdar quarter of Istanbul.

Mustafa Kütâhî’s daughter, Şerife Emine Safvet Hanım, was also a calligrapher. An undated levha in sülüs by her is in the collection of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art (3274), Istanbul.

The artistic pedigree of the great nineteenth-century calligrapher Şevki Efendi (see cat. nos. 40–41) reaches back to Mustafa Kütâhî, via Mahmud Râci and Mehmed Hulûsi (d. 1291/1874).

23. Murakkaa
Istanbul, 1181/1767
Sülüs and nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
Each kit‘a 15.4 x 25.2 cm (6 x 9⅞ in.)
(386)

The last two kut‘alar of a nine-kit‘a murakkaa by Mustafa Kütâhî are shown here. One of the most memorable calligraphers of the eighteenth century, Mustafa Efendi of Kütahya was known for his extremely stylish writing. Most of the kut‘alar in this album are signed, the last dated 1181/1767. The style of these kut‘alar is reminiscent of that of Şeyh Hamdullah (see cat. nos. 1–2). Moreover, the signatures on most of them include the phrase ibni‘-şeyh, or son of the sheikh, which likewise calls to mind Şeyh Hamdullah, who used the same patronymic.

The sülüs line of the lower kit‘a consists of a famous Arabic tongue twister, which repeats the letter cim (J) nine times, producing a complex pattern of letters in relation to the baseline of the writing. Because it requires great mastery to write this sentence in sülüs, first-rate calligraphers enjoy writing it as a way of testing themselves. If any of the cimler are out of place, the entire work fails—no matter how perfectly the letters are formed. In this piece, Kütahyali Mustafa Efendi has arranged the letters most effectively, showing great mastery.

The borders of these kut‘alar are decorated with light-toned kumlu (sand-patterned) and kılıçlı (fishbone-patterned) marbled paper.
من أسرة الفحساء العلياء

وأمضى منها أسيرةً ومحجزة

قد زلزلت آذانها بالمعان تنحيها بين الصدمة والحنين

وأمضى من بين يديها الرجل الحرام يا أعزها

وأمضى منها أسيرةً ومحجزة

وأمضى منها أسيرةً ومحجزة

وأمضى منها أسيرةً ومحجزة

وأمضى منها أسيرةً ومحجزة

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Abdullah Edirnevi
D. 1201/1787

Abdullah bin İsmail was born in Edirne, a city in Thrace, near the borders of Greece and Bulgaria. He studied calligraphy in Edirne with Şuglî Ahmed Dede (d. 1140/1728), then became the student of Şekerzade Mehmed Efendi (see cat. no. 21) in Istanbul. He received his icâzet from Şekerzade and died in 1201/1787.

24. Enâm-i Şerîf
İstanbul, 1193/1779

Nesîh
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 16.5 × 11.6 cm (6½ × 4½ in.)
(288)

According to the colophon on folio 80r of this Enâm-i Şerîf, Sultan Selim III (r. 1789–1807), the twenty-eighth Ottoman sultan, commissioned the work. It was written by Abdullah Edirnevi in nesih script, and dated 1193/1779. It is also noted in the colophon that the illumination was done by one Hâfız Mehmed of the private library in the Topkapi Sarayi. Beginning in the eighteenth century, it became the custom to add miniatures of Mecca, “the ennobled,” and Medina, “the radiant,” to the book of prayers for the Prophet called Delâîl-ı-Hayrât and to the collection of Qur’anic chapters called Enâm-i Şerîf. (See the entry for catalogue number 2 for a description of the contents of the Enâm-i Şerîf.) Such miniatures (folios 78v and 79r) are illustrated here. In the absence of additional signatures, it is assumed that Hâfiz Mehmed painted these miniatures.

The work is written on ninety-nine folios, eleven lines per page. The style of illumination is unconventional, as is the vigorous color scheme. The book has no mukābâb (flap) on its binding.
Before coming to Istanbul, Hāfiz Yusuf Efendi worked as a towel maker in the eastern part of the Ottoman Empire. In Istanbul, he studied both calligraphy and the Qur’an with the imam of the reed-mat makers’ guild, Mustafa Efendi, who was a student of Eğrikapılı Râsim Efendi’s (see cat. no. 19). Later, he studied with İbrahim Rodosî (d. 1201/1787), from whom he received his icâzet. During this period, Hāfiz Yusuf met Eğrikapılı Mehmed Râsim and learned a great deal from him. Hāfiz Yusuf taught calligraphy himself, first at the school at the Galata Sarayı and then at the Topkapı Sarayı. He died on Zilhicce 29, 1201/ October 12, 1787. The sources do not say where he was buried.

25. Kut’a
Istanbul, second half of 18th century
Sülüs and nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
22.6 × 15 cm (8¾ × 5¾ in.)
127

The harmony of the calligraphy, illumination, and colors in this eighteenth-century kut’a makes it a charming work. Hāfiz Yusuf Efendi was one of the third generation of calligraphers to write sülüs and nesih in the mode of Hāfiz Osman (see cat. nos. 14–16). His teacher Eğrikapılı Mehmed Râsim Efendi was trained by Yedikuleli Seyyid Abdullah Efendi (see cat. nos. 17–18), who studied with Hāfiz Osman himself.

The illumination of this kut’a, like the writing, belongs to the latter half of the eighteenth century, but the artist is unknown.
Born in Ünye on the Black Sea, İsmail Zühdi was brought to Istanbul by his father, Mehmed Kaptan. There he learned the six scripts from Ahmed Hufzi Efendi (d. 1181/1767) and memorized the Qur’an. He also studied with another calligrapher, Mehmed Emin, taking the name Zühdi while earning his icâzet. He began to teach calligraphy at the Imperial Palace Service (Enderûn-ı Hümayûn) during Sultan Mustafa III’s reign (1757–74) and held that position until the end of his life. İsmail Zühdi was the Ottoman court calligrapher, producing forty mushaflar and countless kut’a lar, albums, and hilyeler. In 1215/1800, he copied the celi sülüs inscription for the tomb of Şah Sultan, near the Eyüb and Defterdar districts of Istanbul.

İsmail Zühdi had many calligraphy students, the most prominent of whom was his younger brother, Mustafa Râkim (see cat. no. 27). İsmail Zühdi followed the old method in celi sülüs; to spare his feelings, Mustafa Râkim did not reveal his own innovations in that script until his elder brother’s death.

İsmail Zühdi died on Şevval 1, 1221/December 12, 1806, and was buried in the Edirnekapı Cemetery, Istanbul, where calligraphers still come to admire the beautiful words Râkim inscribed on the gravestone. According to the late Necmeddin Okyay (see cat. nos. 59–60)—who himself heard the anecdote from Sâmi Efendi (see cat. nos. 49–52)—Mustafa Râkim had a dream the night after he copied the inscription for his brother’s gravestone. In the dream, his brother came to him and told him the elîfer (tall, vertical letters) in the inscription were too thin and that he had better give them kaftans to wear. When he awoke the next morning, Mustafa Râkim looked at the inscription and, sure enough, the letters were too thin, so he rectified the error.

26. Kut’a

Istanbul, 18th century

Sülüs and nesih

Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard

15.6 × 22.7 cm (6½ × 8¾ in.)

(128)

This kut’a has an unusual format: two lines of nesih, followed by one line of sülüs, ending with four lines of nesih. (For a discussion of kut’a formats, see pages 27–29 and figure 15, in the introduction.) Instead of two kiltilk illuminations, as usual, there are four. The borders are decorated with the sim-efsan (silver-flake) technique. As in the kut’a by Mustafa Kütâhi (cat. no. 25), the sülüs line here consists of an Arabic tongue twister, a jingle with little content. Aesthetically, however, İsmail Zühdi’s tongue twister is more successful than Mustafa Kütâhi’s.
Mustafa Râkim
1171/1758–1241/1826

Mustafa was born in Ünye, on the Black Sea, in 1171/1758. While he was still young, his father, Mehmed Kaptan, brought him to Istanbul to live with his elder brother, İsmail Zühtü (see cat. no. 26). There he began his religious education and was taught the art of calligraphy by his brother and by Üçüncü Derviş Ali (d. 1200/1786). Having received his icâzet, Mustafa began to sign his works Râkim (Writer).

Mustafa Râkim was also known as a painter. He presented one painting to Sultan Selim III (r. 1789–1807); the sultan admired it so much that he invited the artist for an audience. During this audience, Mustafa Râkim drew a portrait of the sultan, the whereabouts of which are unknown. He was appointed müdderris (professor) and given responsibility for making drawings for Ottoman currency and for writing the tuğra. When Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808–39; see cat. no. 34) acceded to the throne, he studied sülüs and celli sülüs with Râkim, who was later given the titular post of kâddi (judge of Islamic law) of İzmir. He occupied several distinguished positions over the years until he became kâddusker (supreme judge) of Anatolia in 1258/1843. He suffered a stroke and died on Șa’ban 15, 1241/March 25, 1826. According to a wish expressed in his will, he was buried in a tomb adjacent to the school named after him in the Karagümüş quarter of Istanbul.

The great innovations introduced by Mustafa Râkim in writing celli sülüs script and the tuğra are discussed in the introduction to this volume. He also wrote kitâlar and ta’llik, and inscriptions in celli ta’llik, and had some success with them, writing with the same skill he showed in other scripts. Râkim’s method in celli ta’llik, however, did not supersede that of Yesârızâde (d. 1265/1849).

In addition to his various kitâlar and levhalar, Râkim produced bands of calligraphy for the interior walls of the mausoleum of Princess Nakşidil Sultan (the text is from chapter 76 of the Qur’an). He also wrote inscriptions for the gates of the hazire (enclosed burial precinct) in the Fatih quarter of Istanbul, and he copied inscriptions and decorations for gravestones, such as the one for his elder brother. During his final illness, he did the calligraphy for bands inside the Nusretiye Mosque, in the Tophâne quarter (Qur’an 78—Nebe, or News—served as the text). Stencils of his calligraphic works in cell are now in the collection of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, Istanbul.

In the biographical work Son hattatlar (The Last Calligraphers), İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal İnal (1879–1957) draws this verse portrait of Râkim Efendi:

It is befitting to say of Mustafa Râkim:
“He is the sultan of the magnificent cell style.”
The Almighty Lord created only one like him.
There never was, nor will be, his peer.

27. Levha
Istanbul, after 1225/1809
Celli sülüs
Gold on fabric
45 x 56 cm (17 1/2 x 21 3/4 in.)
Yesârî Mehmed Es’ad Efendî
D. 1213/1798

Yesârî (the Left-Handed) was born in Istanbul, the son of Kara Mahmud Ağa. He was paralyzed on the right side and afflicted with tremors on the left. In spite of his handicap, he was able to usher in a new era in the writing of ta’lîk, and because of this achievement, he was what is traditionally called a “marvel of God’s might.”

Yesârî first sought lessons from the master of ta’lîk Şeyhülislâm Velüeddin Efendi (d. 1182/1768), who turned him away because of his seemingly helpless condition. He then began studies with Dedêzade Mehmed Efendi (d. 1173/1759). Young Mehmed Es’ad so surprised his teacher with his talent that he soon won his icâzetnâme, in 1167/1754. At the icâzet ceremony, Velüeddîn is reported to have said, “I would have had the honor, but alas, I let it slip away.”

At first, Yesârî Es’ad Efendi followed the method of the great Persian master Mir ‘Imâd al-Hasanî (961/1554–1024/1615) in the nesta’lîk (ta’lîk) script. But after 1190/1776, he began to develop his own style, which led to a new Ottoman method. Yesârî’s career reached a peak with this innovative style between 1196/1782 and 1200/1786; and, beginning in the reign of Sultan Mustafa III (1757–74), he served as master of calligraphy in the imperial palace. Sultan Selim III (r. 1789–1807) was favorably inclined toward him and admired the inscriptions Yesârî wrote for architectural monuments the sultan had commissioned. Among Yesârî’s students was his son, Yesârîzade Mustafa İzzet (d. 1265/1849). Other students included Arabzade Sa’dullah (see cat. no. 29), Mehmed Şehabeddin, and Mir Emin (1171/1759–1224/1809). It is said that so many students came to Yesârî’s house to take lessons that the stationer Kadri Üsta was able to make a living selling âhâr paper outside Yesârî’s front door.

Yesârî was so weak and small that he was carried from room to room in a special basket. In 1206/1792, his son took him on a pilgrimage to Mecca. His illness worsened in his last years, and he died on Recep 11, 1213/December 19, 1798. He was buried in a small cemetery in the Gelenbevi section of the Fatih district of Istanbul. His son was eventually buried beside him. The site has been covered by a road and the gravestones moved to the cemetery of the Fatih Mosque.

Over the course of his career, Yesârî wrote kit’alar, murakkaalar, levhalalar; and some well-known inscriptions. His inscriptions at such sites in Istanbul as Sultan Mehmed II’s tomb (where his work appears on the inside of the door), the Hao Selim Ağa Library in Üsküdar, the Topkapi Sarayî (his work can be found at the barracks of the Black Eunuchs, inside the Harem), the Beylerbeyi Mosque, and the Aynalî Kavak Sarayi are among the finest examples of Ottoman ta’lîk.

28. Murakkaalar
Istanbul, 18th century
Ta’lîk
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
Each kit’a 54.7 x 21.4 cm (13 ½ x 8 ½ in.)
(547)

In learning calligraphy, one first practices the letters one by one, then in pairs. These initial lessons are called the müfredât exercises. Upon finishing these to the master’s satisfaction, the student moves on to the mürekkebât exercises, which consist of poetic odes in praise of the Prophet, aphorisms, and such. Writing these sentences teaches the student how to compose the letters into lines.

Shown here, on the right-hand page, are müfredât exercises in the ta’lîk script, from the letter mim (M) through the letter he (H). On the left-hand page, also in ta’lîk, is a verse in Persian, which translates, “The time for deliverance from the müfredât has come. It is now time to practice the mürekkebât.” There is no doubt that all twelve kit’alar in this undated meşk album were written by Yesârî Mehmed Es’ad Efendi, but the line of smaller ta’lîk at the bottom of the left-hand page is believed to have been added to the album by another calligrapher.
ARABZADE MEHMET SA'DULLAH EFENDI
1180/1767-1259/1843

Born in Istanbul on Şaban 12, 1180/January 13, 1767, Arabzade Mehmed Sa'dullah Efendi was the son of Mehmed Arif Efendi and the grandson of Arabzade Ataullah Efendi, an Ottoman şeyhülislâm, or supreme religious authority. Like his father and grandfather, he belonged to the ilmiye (religious-scholar) class of Ottoman society. He became the kâdi (judge of Islamic law) of Istanbul, then kâdiasker (supreme judge) of Anatolia and Rumelia, and finally reisülulemâ (chief of the ulemâ, or Islamic religious establishment). He died on Ramazan 5, 1259/September 29, 1843, and was buried in the family graveyard, on Divanyolu Avenue in the Çarşılıkapi quarter of Istanbul.

Sa'dullah Efendi is reported to have had an exemplary character. He studied ta'liq calligraphy with Yesâri Es'ad Efendi (see cat. no. 28) and received his icâzet in 1208/1794. Kit'alar and celi ta'liq levhalar by him are still extant. His inscriptions in celi ta'liq, cut in stone, can be seen at the Sütlüce Sa'diye Lodge, the State Press of Istanbul, and the Mevlevi Sufi Lodge (Mevlevihâne) in Kütahya.

29. Murakkab
Istanbul, late 18th century
Ta'liq
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
Binding 33 × 21.4 cm (12 ¾ × 8 ¾ in.)
(379)

The favored texts for mürekkebât meşki exercises were the kasıde (ode) in Persian on the besmele (cat. no. 55) by Ābel al-Rahmân Mullâ Jâmi (817/1414–898/1492) and the Hîye-i Hâkâni, an ode by Hâkâni Mehmed Bey (d. 1015/1606) that describes the besmele and the Prophet. The opening lines of the latter work are shown here, on the thirteenth and fourteenth kut'alar of this seventeen-kut'a album. The text translates as follows:

Let us begin the discussion with the besmele.
May it solve even this famous mystery.
The besmele is a mirror showing
The description of purity—that beautiful face.

May God be praised, as he is the unique,
Also all-wise and mighty.
He does as He wills in all things perfectly.
There is no distinction with him between the highborn and the lowly.

A device that stands for the Arabic word sa'y (Turkish spelling: sa'y), meaning "persevere," can be seen under each line of calligraphy.

The twelve preceding kut'alar are müfredât exercises. Following the album's final kut'a is a painting of a vase of flowers. The paper was manufactured especially for ta'liq kut'alar. On some pages, the stamp of the papermaker Rif'at Efendi can be seen; it appears in the lower left corner of the right-hand kut'a shown here.

This album was formerly considered to be by Yesâri Es'ad Efendi, but critical examination shows that it is actually by his student Arabzade Mehmed Sa'dullah Efendi.

The Hîye-i Hâkâni is also the text in catalogue number 55.
سلام به خیر ای باد
دو زبان اشکاق و کلام
من می‌دانم و می‌فهمم
که باید به مسیری بپله
علیه خداوند و بیرحم
Seyyid Osman Efendi
D. 1220/1805

Son of a man who was also named Osman, Seyyid Osman Efendi studied with a calligrapher called Hacizade Mustafa Karamani who lived in Istanbul's Çengelköy neighborhood, on the Anatolian shore of the Bosphorus. Seyyid Osman Efendi's calligraphic pedigree goes directly back to Hâfiz Osman (see cat. nos. 14–16), through five generations of calligraphers.

Seyyid Osman Efendi married the daughter of a calligrapher named İbrahim Afif (d. 1181/1767) and for that reason usually added to his signature the words “son-in-law of İbrahim Afif.” He was said to have been a large man who, by his occasionally erratic behavior, earned the name Deli Osman, or Crazy Osman. He died on Safar 23, 1220/May 23, 1805, and was buried near Şeyh Hamdullah (see cat. nos. 1–2).

30. Kasıde-i Bürde
Istanbul, early 19th century

Nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 15.9 x 10.1 cm (5 3/8 x 3 7/8 in.)

This work by Seyyid Osman Efendi contains the text of an ode in praise of the Prophet, the Kasıde-i Bürde. Shown here are folios 5v and 6r, from a total of fifteen folios written in a small but elegant nesih. (This ode can also be written as an album; see catalogue number 56.) The hemistiches and verses are separated by gilded duraklar.

The first page of this volume is illuminated, but the illuminator is unknown.

Aware of this calligrapher's predilection for small script, Sultan Selim III (r. 1789–1807) commissioned him to write a sancak mushaf
(emblem Qur'an). These tiny Qur'ans—approximately two inches high—would be enclosed in special boxes and affixed to the tops of military standards carried by the Ottoman army. These small volumes were written in a fine version of the nesih script called gubari (like dust).
Hacı Ahmed Nâîlî signed himself both Galata and Eyyûbî, indicating that he lived sometimes in the Galata section of Istanbul, sometimes in the Eyyûb district. His father, İbrahim Zarifi, was a boatman. Father and son went together to Mustafa Kütâhî (see cat. no. 23) for calligraphy lessons. Nâîlî Efendi taught at the Taşmekteb School in Galata. He wrote mostly in resîh and always indicated in the colophon of his mushaflar which number the codex was. At his death, he had completed at least 121 copies of the Qur’an.

His surviving works, in addition to mushaflar, include such religious texts as the al-Shifâ (a biography of the Prophet and collection of hadisler), by al-Qâdi ‘Iyâd (476/1085–544/1149), and the Delâîîl-ı-Hayrât. Ahmed Nâîlî died in 1229/1814 and was buried in the Yâvedûd Cemetery, in the Defterdar district of Istanbul, near the Golden Horn. His son, Hâфиз İbrahim Efendi (d. 1227/1812), was also a calligrapher and was buried in the same cemetery—the third generation in a family bound together by calligraphy.

51. Delâîîl-ı-Hayrât
Istanbul, 1214/1799
Resîh
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 16.5 x 11.2 cm (6¼ x 4¼ in.)
(287)

According to the signature on the last page, this Delâîîl-ı-Hayrât, a handbook of prayers for the Prophet, was written by Galatalı Ahmed Nâîlî in 1214/1799. The book consists of eighty-five folios, written in resîh, thirteen lines per page. As can be seen here on folios 70v and 71r, Nâîl Efendi wrote in a delightful small resîh script.

The top, side, and bottom margins, and the notes and commentary written in the margins, are called, collectively, the hâşiyê. In this book, the marginalia are written in a minuscule resîh in diagonal lines (see the upper left margin of folio 71r). The book is bound in the zilbahar style, which became popular in the late eighteenth century. In this style, a simple design, usually geometric, is painted directly on the leather in gold ink, then burnished.

The illumination of the unvan sahibesi (opening page) was painstakingly executed in the zer-ender-zer (gold- upon-gold) style, but the illuminator is unknown.
Mahmud Celâleddîn Efendî
1163/1750–1245/1829

Mahmud Celâleddîn was born in the Daghestan region of Caucasia. Although the exact date of his birth is not known, judging from the level of ability in an album he wrote dated 1188/1778, one can surmise that he was born about 1163/1750. He moved with his father to Istanbul, where he studied calligraphy with a number of masters. It is said that because of his obstinacy, he was not amenable to traditional lessons and instead developed his skill by studying the works of Hâfiz Osman (see cat. nos. 14–16), becoming a well-known master himself. His early works—for example, two items in the Topkapı Sarayi Museum Library, Istanbul (E H 273 and G Y 322-9)—are signed Mahmûdîl-Mevdû, or Mahmud the Beloved. Later, he always signed himself Mahmud Celâleddîn.

He wrote many excellent Qur’âns, prayer handbooks, kut’alar, murakkaalar, hilyeler, and levhalar. Because of its hard and static qualities, however, his cellî sülüs did not bear comparison with that of Mustafa Râkim (see cat. no. 27). Nevertheless, Sultan Abdülmecid (r. 1856–61) took calligraphy lessons from Celâleddîn’s student Mehmed Tahir Efendî (d. 1262/1848), thus giving Celâleddîn’s method a brief life before it became obsolete. A cellî sülüs inscription by Celâleddîn, dated 1207/1793, can be found on the tomb of Mihrîşhâh Vâlide Sultan, in the Eyüp district of Istanbul.

Mahmud Celâleddîn’s stubborn character was said to be reflected in his writing. He spent his life in the İstavroz quarter on the Bosphorus, now the Abdullah Ağa quarter of Beylerbeyî. He died in 1245/1829 and was buried in the cemetery of the Şeyh Murad Lodge, in the Eyüp district. His student Esmâ İbret Hanîm (b. 1194/1780) whom he later married, was one of the foremost female calligraphers of her day.

The text of this levha is an Ottoman Turkish poem:

O heart! Put aside vanity. Life doesn’t end well.

Even if you attain your desires in this world, the outcome is still separation and rejection.

But because the end is bad, must there be gloom and anxiety?

Whether merry and cheerful, or sorrowful and afflicted, the end is one.

So come, O heart, to the corner of divine reliance and celebrate God’s unity.

Let us see, whatever God decrees, the end is full of benevolence.

Set free the ship of human affairs to glide in the sea of divine reliance.

Unfurl the sail of aspiration, stand aside, and watch!

The duraklar and the koltuk tulip illuminations are contemporary with the calligraphy. The zencerekâ (chain) inner border and the outer border, executed in the halkârî style, were done by Rıkkat Kunt (1330/1905–1406/1986) in the 1970s, when the levha was restored. (Rıkkat Kunt sought to rediscover the classic style of the art of illumination. The ceramics teacher Feyzullah Daygîl [1910–1949] and the calligrapher Necmeddin Oktay [see cat. nos. 59–60] played a part in the stylistic renaissance that Rıkkat Kunt initiated. Her style of halkârî illumination, in particular, has left its mark.)

This levha is in sülüs script. Celâleddîn’s sülüs was usually stiff, the exact opposite of that of his contemporary Mustafa Râkim.

That stiffness is especially evident in Celâleddîn’s cellî sülüs levhalar; but it is not obvious in this piece.

52. Levha
Istanbul, late 18th–early 19th century
Sülüs
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
54.2 × 42.5 cm (21½ × 16½ in.)
(74)
At the end of this *kut’a*, written in diagonal lines of *nesih* between two lines of *sülüs*, Mahmud Celâleddin signed himself Hâfız Mahmud, adding in the right *kolotuk* that he copied the work from one by Hamdullah, “son of the sheikh” (see cat. nos. 1–2). Celâleddin so successfully mimics Şeyh Hamdullah here that, at first glance, his own artistic identity seems to have been submerged.

Imitation is not regarded favorably in other arts, but it is accepted that calligraphy is an imitative (*taklîdî*) art. Traditionally, master calligraphers wrote exactly like their teachers, adopting their styles entirely. In later centuries, however, the concept of *taklîd* (imitation) acquired a new meaning. After being trained and credentialed, calligraphers preferred to develop their own artistic identity. Only then would a calligrapher choose to imitate a work by his teacher or by one of the old masters. It was considered an honor to the original calligrapher to indicate on a work that it was done in imitation of his style. Moreover, by doing so, the calligrapher prevented the work’s being considered a forgery.

The art of *taklîd* is an inestimably difficult art. It requires a thorough study of the master whose work is being copied. What is more difficult, it also requires the calligrapher to engrave a work on his memory, so to speak, and reproduce it with near-photographic fidelity. The result of *taklîd* is as exact as a tracing—although tracing itself is an unacceptable means of copying a work.

On this *kut’a*, the inner border is composed of *kumlu* (sand-patterned) marbling and the outer border is in the *battal* pattern. (The simplest of all ebrû papers, *battal* is made from one or more pigments left exactly as they fell on the tragacanth bath, untouched by a stylus or comb; it is similar to, but not identical with, the stone pattern of Western marbling.) All the parts of the work are surrounded with golden *cedvel* frames.
The son of the twenty-seventh Ottoman sultan, Abdülhamid I (r. 1774–89), Mahmud was born in Istanbul on Ramazan 13, 1199/July 20, 1785. His father died while he was still a young child, and he was brought up under the patronage of his uncle, Sultan Selim III (r. 1789–1807). On Gemâziyelâhur 4, 1223/July 28, 1808, after a period of political turbulence, he ascended the throne as the thirtieth Ottoman sultan and held the sultanate until his death on Rebiülâhur 18, 1255/July 1, 1839. The political and administrative details of his life and reign can be found in history books; here, only his connection with calligraphy will be addressed.

As a prince, Mahmud studied sülüs and nesih with Kebecizâde Mehmed Vasfi (d. 1247/1831); in 1222/1807, he wrote a hîye as his icâzet piece (Topkapi Sarayi Museum Library, Istanbul, gy 1353). He is known to have written two Qur’ans in nesih during this period. Following his ascension to the throne, he began studying calligraphy with Mustafa Râkim (see cat. no. 27). Whenever affairs of state allowed, he devoted time to writing in celi sülüs, leaving nearly forty levhalar in that script. Enlarged copies of these pieces were made for mosques by the zer-endûd process or in malakârî (stuccowork), using stencils.

It is common for a master to correct his pupil’s work, and it is understood that after Sultan Mahmud wrote a levha, Mustafa Râkim corrected the calligraphy. For this reason, the only extant levhalar by Sultan Mahmud are those that approach the quality of Râkim’s work. Nevertheless, in the mêsêkler that he wrote with his own hand, Sultan Mahmud showed genuine talent and mastery. He was also, incidentally, gifted in musical composition.

54. Levha
Istanbul, early 19th century
Celî sülüs
Gold on painted cardboard
54 × 87 cm (21¾ × 33¾ in.)
(109)

This levha was written by Sultan Mahmud II in the style of his teacher, Mustafa Râkim. The text reads: “I cannot have success except with the help of God” (Qur’an 11:88). The piece was prepared by the zer-endûd method: it was painted in gold on a dark blue background, using a stencil. To the left of the text is a magnificent composition designed by Râkim for the sultan. It reads: ketebehâ Mahmud bin Abdülhamid Hân (Mahmud, son of Abdülhamid, wrote this).

In the early eighteenth century, Turkish illumination began to be influenced by Western decorative principles. The border decoration of this levha, drawn on a fez-red background, is in the so-called Turkish Rococo style of the nineteenth century. After 1826, when Sultan Mahmud II conferred on his non-Muslim subjects the right to become illuminators, the Turkish Rococo began to lose its originality, resulting in the kind of lackluster decoration seen on this levha.
وَمَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ نَفْعٍ إِلَّا مَرَضٍ بَالٍ
A native of Aksu, near the north-central Anatolian city of Kastamonu, Mustafa Vásif went to Istanbul as a young man and studied calligraphy with Kebecizade Mehmed Vasfi (d. 1247/1831), from whom he received his icâzet. He was known by the nickname gömez, or apprentice, which was given to him by his teacher. Çömez Mustafa studied as well with Ömer Vasfi (d. 1240/1825), who was also called Lâz Ömer.

Mustafa Vásif was the custodian of the mausoleum of Sultan Abdüllahamid I (r. 1774–89), in Bahçekapı, Istanbul, and was later appointed director of the Hamid I Philanthropic Foundation (Hamîd-i Evvel Vakfi). As a calligrapher, he wrote kutâlar and hilyeler in sütûs and nesih and surely wrote Qur’ans as well. It was Çömez Mustafa who, on the pilgrimage to Mecca, saw a Muslim from Java write with a palm-thorn pen, and introduced such pens to Ottoman calligraphers. Because of its durability, the cava kalemi became the instrument of choice for writing long texts in small scripts. Çömez Mustafa is also known for having a powerful wrist, probably due to his prowess with the slingshot.

Mustafa Vásif died in 1269/1853 and was buried on the seaward side of the Eyüb Mosque, Istanbul. His son, Çömezâde Muhsin (d. 1304/1887), was also a calligrapher.

In general, this hîye conforms to the traditional hîye format described in the introduction to this volume (see pages 34–37 and fig. 18). The besele is in muhakkak script. The Rahmet Ayeti (Mercy Verse; Qur’an 2:107) and the names of the first four caliphs are written in sütûs, and the rest of the text is in nesih. This hîye differs from most, however, in Mustafa Vásif’s inclusion of a hadîs transmitted by ‘Ali about the description of the Prophet. Because of this additional text, the etek section is deeper than usual and the koluklar are elongated. The göbek and its hilâl are flanked by two takozlar (chocks), illuminated so as to harmonize with the koluklar. The illumination is contemporary with the calligraphy, with the exception of the border immediately surrounding the hîye, which was illuminated by Muhsin Demironat (1525/1907–1902/1983) in pale colors with elegant halkârî designs. (At the suggestion of Nêmedîn Okyay [see cat. nos. 59–60], Muhsin studied and adopted the classic style of illumination. One of the greatest Turkish illuminators of the twentieth century, he left many fine examples of illumination on kutâlar, hilyeler, and levhalar.) The outermost border was illuminated over an ultramarine blue background in the nineteenth century.
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَإِلَيْهِ تَرْجُعُونَ
Kâdiasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi
1216/1801-1295/1876

Seyyid Mustafa was born in Tosya, a town south of Kastamonu, which is near the Black Sea, in 1216/1801. Upon the death of his father, Destan (or Bostan) Ağazade Mustafa Ağâ, his mother sent him to Istanbul to study. He began taking lessons in the Fatih medrese (Islamic theological school) at an early age and also studied music. When Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808–39; see cat. no. 34) heard Seyyid Mustafa reciting the Qur'an and singing hymns in the Hidâyet Mosque, in Bahçekapi, Istanbul, he ordered that the young man be sent to the Imperial Palace Service (Enderûn-ı Hümâyun), where he spent three years. He spent three more years in the Galata Sarayı, where he studied science and art and became an accomplished reed-flute player. He also learned sülüs and nesih from Çömez Mustafa Efendi (see cat. no. 55) and ta’llik and cell ta’llik from Yesârîzade Mustafa İzzet Efendi (d. 1265/1849). Seyyid Mustafa adopted the pen name İzzet from his master and used it to sign his calligraphy.

Although the sultan came to love and respect him, Seyyid Mustafa found court life too confining and the rules of protocol too uncongenial, and thought of running away. He asked the sultan’s permission to perform the pilgrimage and, on his way back from Mecca, stayed in Cairo for some time before finally returning to Istanbul. Once there, instead of going back to the imperial palace, he decided to spend the remainder of his life in piety and worship.

One day in the month of Ramazan 1247/1832, the sultan attended prayers in the Bayezid Mosque, where he heard the unmistakable voice of Mustafa İzzet Efendi. Offended that Seyyid Mustafa had not returned to the palace, the sultan ordered that he be punished; in the end, however, Seyyid Mustafa was pardoned and went on to occupy distinguished religious and juridical posts during the reign of Sultan Abdülmecid (1859–61).

The following anecdote was reported by the late Necmeddin Okyay (see cat. nos. 59–60). It is worth noting, for it shows that calligraphy, like any other art, suffers if not practiced daily and with dedication. In 1255/1839, Okyay said, Mustafa İzzet Efendi was appointed preacher of the Eyüp Mosque, and he continued in that position for six years. Every Friday, he would stop working on calligraphy to prepare the Friday prayer and to perform his own worship. Later, he would say to his students, “I know which works I wrote on Saturdays, even if I view the calligraphy from the wrong side, even after forty years have elapsed.”

Mustafa İzzet Efendi was calligraphy master for the princes of the ruling family and was a member of the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (Meclis-i Vâlâ-ı Ahkâm-ı Adliye). He became kâdiasker (supreme judge) of Rumelia, the reisüle淋mâ (chief of the ule淋mâ, the Islamic religious establishment), and supervisor of the affairs of the Prophet’s descendants. He died on Sevval 27, 1295/November 15, 1876.

56. Murakkab
Istanbul, 1265/1849
Sülüs and nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
18.7 × 26.5 cm (7½ × 10¼ in.)
(164)

This is the last kut’a of a korâkân composed of twenty-three sülüs- and nesih kut’alar from the hand of one of the most prominent calligraphers of the nineteenth century (see also fig. 16 on page 28). Kâdiasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi wrote this album at the age of forty-eight or forty-nine. Its text is the Kaside-i Bürde, a well-known ode in praise of the Prophet (see also cat. no. 50). The piece follows the format used for meşk exercises: one line of sülüs, two shorter lines of nesih, and one line of sülüs. In the left-hand koltuk the calligrapher signed the work, in rhyming prose, Hâk-pây-i evliyâ Seyyid İzzet Mustafâ (Dust of the feet of the saints, Seyyid İzzet Mustafa), and dated it [i]1265/1849.

Two of the preceding kut’alar, and three near the end of the album, have stylized flower bouquets in the koltuklar. The illumination, contemporary with the calligraphy, is very fine, featuring attractive colors and designs. Unfortunately, the illuminator left no signature.

The murakkab is bound between simple covers, each bearing the tugra of Sultan Abdülmecid.

Meşk albums like this one, which contain a unified text (such as a single work of poetry), read consecutively from top to bottom of each kut’a.
and was buried in the hazire (enclosed cemetery) of the Kâdirî Lodge (Kâdirihâne) in the Tophâne quarter of Istanbul.

Seyyid Mustafa's most important calligraphy pupils were Şefik Bey (see cat. no. 39), Abdullah Zühdi Efendi (see cat. no. 38), Muhsinzâde Abdullah Bey (see cat. no. 42), and Hasan Rüza Efendi (see cat. no. 56).

Kâdîasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi wrote eleven mustaflar, more than two hundred hilyeler (a few of them quite large), and numerous kütâlar and levhalar. His 1275/1859 round levhalar in Aya Sofya Mosque are still the largest of their kind in the Islamic world (each is twenty-five feet in diameter). He also produced inscriptions in celi sülüs or celi ta'lik for other buildings, including the Hırka-i Şerîf Mosque, the Âli Paşa Mosque, the Dolmabahçe Sarayı, the rear facade of the Ministry of War (now the University of Istanbul), the sultan's lodge of the Ayasofya Mosque, and the Nâlî Masjid in Bâbâli— all in Istanbul— and Muhammad ‘Ali Pasha's mausoleum in Cairo. He also wrote part of the famous Nûr Ayeti (Verse of Light; Qur'an 24:35) in celi sülüs inside the domes of various Istanbul mosques, including the Ayasofya, Hırka-i Şerîf, Büyük Kasımpaşa, Küçük Mecidiye, Sinan Paşa, and Yahya Efendi. These inscriptions were enlarged from Mustafa İzzet's original stencils by means of squaring.

An interesting historical footnote: When the Washington Monument was being erected, the nations of the world were asked to contribute plaques or panels to be set in the walls of the monument's staircase. Naval Commander Emin Bey, who was then the Ottoman representative in the United States, became interested in the project, and Sultan Abdülmecid approved Turkish participation. Kâdîasker Mustafa İzzet wrote the following lines under the sultan's tugra, in celi ta'lik:

In support of eternal friendship, Abdülmecid Hân
wrote his honorable name for the tall stone edifice in Washington.

The text was carved on a marble plaque, which was transported to the United States by sea at a cost of 390 kurus (about $290 today).

In addition to being a calligrapher, Mustafa İzzet was a masterful performer on the ney (reed flute) and had a particularly beautiful singing voice. His religious and secular musical compositions are few in number (there are just twenty-six) but highly regarded by musicians. No master musician ever reached the level of Kâdîasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi in calligraphy, and no calligrapher ever reached the kâdîasker's degree of achievement in music.

As Mustafa İzzet was being buried, a wise man standing by the grave said, "Gentlemen, we have just interred here a casket of accomplishments."

57. Küt’a
Istanbul, 1288/1871
Sülüs and nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
21.5 × 26 cm (8½ × 10½ in.)
(115)

This küt’a is dated 1288/1871, more than twenty years later than catalogue number 36. In a sense, it shows the effect of the passing years on Mustafa İzzet's work. As Necess Süleyman once said, "The nesih script that the kâdîasker wrote after 1280 [1863] recalls the flight of butterflies."

The küt’a has four lines of nesih between two lines of sülüs. In the signature, Mustafa İzzet states that, at the time he made this piece, he was the reisülulumâ. This title was not official; rather, it was the custom to bestow it on the senior kâdîasker of Rumelia, the European territory of the empire. In his earlier works, the calligrapher signed himself Hâk-pây-i evliyâ Seyyid İzzet Mustafâ (Dust of the feet of the saints, Seyyid İzzet Mustafa). In his later years, he preferred to sign himself Bende-i âl-i Abâ, Seyyid İzzet Mustafâ (Servant of the family of the cloak [the family of the Prophet], Seyyid İzzet Mustafa). Both these formulas are in rhyme, and both express a dervishlike modesty.

The work is decorated in the zer-ender-zer (gold upon gold) style by an unknown illuminator.
In some of the signatures on his works, Abdullah Zühdî claims descent from the venerable Companion of the Prophet Ťamîm al-Dârî. Probably born in Damascus, he moved with his family to Istanbul and began studying calligraphy with Eyübî Râşîd Efendi (d. 1292/1875). His true master, however, was Kâdiasker Mustafa Îzîzet Efendi (see cat. nos. 36–37), and he wrote sülüs and nesîh in Mustafa Îzîzet’s style. Zühdî Efendi taught calligraphy and painting in the meşkânîne (scriptorium) in the Nurusmanîye Mosque and at the Imperial School of Military Engineering (Mühendishânî-i Berri-i Hümâyûn). He had a special talent for taktîl (imitative) calligraphy.

It is said that Sultan Abdülmecid (r. 1839–61) admired the sample of celi sülüs written by Zühdî Efendi so much more than the samples presented by other calligraphers that he chose him, in 1275/1857, to write the inscriptions for the Prophet’s Mosque in Medina. Zühdî Efendi stayed in Medina for about seven years. During that time he wrote Qur’ânic verses, hadîslar, and odes to the Prophet in celi sülüs on the drums of the 140 domes of the Prophet’s Mosque and on bands running along its walls. Zühdî Efendi is unsurpassed among calligraphers in the amount of celi sülüs he produced for a single building. Zühdî Efendi’s celi sülüs text in the Prophet’s Mosque, including the three bands on the kâble wall (the wall facing Mecca), comes to more than 6,500 feet. Most of these elegant inscriptions are still extant.

Zühdî Efendi was assisted in this work by Çömezzâde Muhsin Efendi (d. 1304/1887), the gilder Haci Hüseyin Efendi (see cat. no. 40), and pupil Haci Ahmed Efendi. Because Zühdî Efendi was a painter as well as a calligrapher, he paid a great deal of attention to interlacing forms in celi sülüs and excelled in creating artistic shapes. But, because he disregarded accepted composition design, it is difficult for someone who does not know the verses by heart to read them correctly.

After his stay in Medina, Abdullah Zühdî settled in Cairo, where he spent the rest of his life practicing calligraphy for the government (writing legends on bank notes, for example); superintending calligraphy lessons in schools; and preparing calligraphic inscriptions for buildings, including the distinguished inscriptions he wrote for the Umm ‘Abbâs Public Fountain. Many calligraphers were apprenticed to Abdullah Zühdî, who was instrumental in making calligraphy a popular art in Egypt in the last century and won the title “calligrapher of Egypt.” He died in Cairo in 1296/1879 and was buried near the tomb of the founder of the Shâfi‘î school of Islamic jurisprudence, Imam İdrîs al-Shâfi‘î.

38. Amme cûzû
Istanbul, 1265/1847
Nesîh
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 21.5 x 14.8 cm (8 1/4 x 5 3/4 in.)
(21)

In earlier times, the Qur’ân was bound in thirty individual volumes, one cûz (one-thirtieth of the text) per volume, for the purpose of sequential recitation. The thirtieth cûz, called the Amme cûzû after the first word of the section, was frequently written as a separate work for use in schools. After learning the alphabet, students would be taught the short chapters in this cûz as a prelude to learning the rest of the Qur’ân by heart.

Shown here are the first two pages (folios iv and 2r) of an Amme cûzû written by the young Abdullah Zühdî in 1265/1847, when he still lived in Istanbul. In complete Qur’âns (mushafîlar), the first two pages are illuminated symmetrically as a serlevha, but in a cûz only folio iv is fully illuminated. This folio is called the unvan sahibesi, or opening page.
Şefik Bey was born about 1255/1830 in Istanbul and learned sülüs and nesih first from Ali Vafi Efendi (d. 1253/1837), then from his uncle by marriage, Kâdiasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi (see cat. nos. 36–37). In his youth, he worked as a clerk in the chancery of the Imperial Council of State (Divân-i Hümayûn), where he learned the divânî and celeft divânî scripts and how to write the tugra. He also taught calligraphy for thirty-four years—to the First Regiment of the Palace Cavalry, at the Imperial College of Music (Mûsîka-i Hümayûn; a teaching institution for the Imperial Brass Band), and to the officials of the sultan’s palace. Aided by Abdülfettah Efendi, he repaired the inscriptions in the Ulu Cami (Great Mosque) in the city of Bursa, which had suffered serious damage in the earthquake of 1855, and added work of his own in celeft scripts.

It was Şefik Bey who wrote a band of Qur’anic verses for the mausoleum of Sultan Abdülmejid (r. 1856–61). He also copied chapter 36 of the Qur’an (Yâsin) for a band of faience on the Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, during its restoration in 1292/1875; the band is still extant. His most famous works, however, are inscriptions sculpted in low relief on the gate of what is now the University of Istanbul: the first and second verses of chapter 48 (Feath, or Victory) of the Qur’an, and the name of the former Directorate of Military Affairs (Daire-i Umûr-i Askerîye).

There is an interesting story in connection with these inscriptions. When Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1861–76) ordered the construction of a building for the Ministry of War in the Bâyezid quarter of Istanbul, he wanted it in operation immediately, but the inscription was among the details that remained unfinished. Şefik Bey was retained to do the job for a fee of sixty gold lira (about $4,500 today). It took Şefik Bey six hours to prepare the stencil. The captain of the general staff, who had made the agreement with Şefik Bey, reflected that he himself earned only six gold lira a month. “Why, then,” he asked, “should a calligrapher who worked only six hours earn sixty gold lira?”

When Şefik Bey heard this, he said, “Tell the captain: This inscription did not take six hours to write; it took sixty years. Go and tell him that I give him not six days, not six weeks, not six months. I give him a full six years. If, in that time, he can write just one letter like what I have written, I will make him a gift of six times what I have asked.” The message was conveyed, and the construction committee intervened in the dispute. Knowing the value of things, the committee paid the calligrapher what his art was worth.

Mehmed Şefik Bey died in Istanbul in 1297/1880 and was buried in the Yahya Efendi Cemetery, in the Beşiktas quarter. He left two mushaflar and countless kit’âlar, levha, and albums. Among his many students were two distinguished calligraphers, Hasan Riza Efendi (see cat. no. 56) and Haydar Ali Efendi (see cat. no. 44).
للهم صراوسا على يد المصطبة
والله خير الصدور على يد المصطبة
ولله السلام على يد المصطبة
وشفيع الأمن والصح وقلية
Mehmed Şevki Efendi
1245/1829–1504/1887

Mehmed Şevki Efendi was born in the village of Kastamonu, just south of the Black Sea, in 1245/1829 and moved to Istanbul while still a boy. In addition to his formal education, he took lessons from his uncle, Mehmed Hulûsi Efendi (d. 1291/1874), in stilâs, nesih, and rskâ‘, obtaining his ıçâzet in 1257/1841.

Hulûsi Efendi was the first librarian of the famous Koca Ragıp Paşa Library in Istanbul. He was also a gifted calligraphy teacher, with a number of pupils in addition to his nephew, and although his own calligraphic works were rather mediocre, he was sincerely devoted to the art. Seeing how talented Şevki was, he said, “This is as far as I can go with you in this art; from now on, I have to take you to Kâdiasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi, and you must stick to his lessons until you have made real progress in the art.” In acknowledging the mastery of others, Hulûsi revealed his modesty and noble nature. But Şevki said to him, “I will seek no other teacher but you,” whereupon Hulûsi wished his pupil well and prayed that he would meet with success.

Because of that prayer, there emerged a new style of calligraphy, later called Şevki’s Manner. Had Şevki Efendi listened to his uncle’s advice and apprenticed himself to Kâdiasker Mustafa Efendi (see cat. nos. 56–57), his name would simply have been added to the list of calligraphers belonging to the “Kâdiasker school,” such as Şefik Bey (see cat. no. 59), Abdullah Zâhid Efendi (see cat. no. 58), and Hasan Riza Efendi (see cat. no. 56). Instead, strengthened by his uncle’s prayer and inspired by the works of the great calligrapher Hâфиз Osman (see cat. nos. 14–16) and other innovators in the art, Şevki was able to develop a style of his own. He is reported to have said, “They taught me calligraphy in the world of dreams.” He wrote twenty-five copies of the Qur’an, and a large number of the Delâiîât-ı Hayrât, evrâdlar (personal prayers), kut’alar, albums, and hilyeler. He also created beautiful levhalar in celi stilâs, but his celi works are not up to the level of those by Sâmi Efendi (see cat. nos. 49–52).

Şevki Efendi’s works earned him a well-deserved popularity, for they are free of defects and reflect his individuality. His close friend Sâmi Efendi was not far from the truth when he said of Şevki Efendi, “He couldn’t write a letter poorly even if he wanted to.”

Şevki Efendi put equal care into all his writings, regardless of the status of those who commissioned them. He did the same with the practice sheets he prepared for his pupils. He worked as a rskâ‘ teacher in the Menşe-i Kütâb-ı Askerî, which trained military scribes, in the Bâyezid quarter of Istanbul. At the same time, he taught calligraphy to the sons of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) for two and a half years. His principal job, however, was in the Secretariat of the Ministry of War (Harbiye Nezâreti Mektubü Kâlemi).

A man of virtue and integrity, Şevki Efendi died on Şâban 13, 1304./May 7, 1887, and was buried near his uncle’s grave in the Merkez

40. Qur’an
Istanbul, 1279/1862
Nesih and rskâ‘
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 19.5 x 12.6 cm (7 ½ x 4 ½ in.)
(57)

Mehmed Şevki Efendi developed a new method for writing the stilâs, nesih, and rskâ‘ scripts, which is still being used by some calligraphers today. He wrote this Qur’an in the middle of his artistic career, in 1279/1862. The text is written in nesih script, fifteen lines per page. Shown here is the illuminated serlevha (folios iv and 2r). The chapter titles are written in white-lead ink in rskâ‘ script against a gold background. The illumination is by Hacı Hüseyin Efendi (d. 1293/1876). (Müzehhib [the Illuminator] Hüseyin left many works. He learned illumination from Hacı Ahmed Efendi and Tefvîk Efendi and worked with Abdullah Zâhid [see cat. no. 38] in Medina.)
Efendi Cemetery, Istanbul. Among the best-known of his many pupils were Hacı Ārif Efendi (see cat. no. 45), Fehmi Efendi (d. 1333/1915), Pazarcıklı Mehmed Hulusi Efendi (d. 1326/1908), and Ziyaeddin Efendi. The eminent artist, teacher, and physician Dr. Süheyl Ünver (1898–1986) was his grandson.

41. Murakkaa
Istanbul, 1280/1865
Sülüs and nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
Binding 16.8 x 26 cm (6 3/8 x 10 1/8 in.)
(216)

This is the first kit'â of an album of meşkler by Mehmed Şevki Efendi. In a meşk, or exercise, the calligraphy teacher writes the text in the script being studied, first letter by letter and then in pairs of letters. In meşkler for the sülüs and nesih scripts, study begins with the famous prayer Rabbi yessir, ve lâtuassir, Rabbi, temmîm bi’ll-hayr (O Lord, make things easy and do not make them difficult. O Lord, make everything come out well). Here this prayer is the text of the first line of sülüs and the first line of nesih. Lines of individual letters follow.

Calligraphy lessons proceed as follows: first, the principal letters of the alphabet are written in order, from elif (A) to ye (Y). The second lesson is the letter bâ (B) combined with each letter in turn: bâ with elif, bâ with bâ, bâ with cim (I), and so on through the alphabet. The letters çe, ha, and hi all have the same shape as cim and are distinguished from one another by the addition of dots. Other groups of letters also look alike and are differentiated by dots. In these cases, only one letter of each group is practiced to master its shape. If a letter has alternate forms—such as the sin (S) with teeth and the kesîdelî (extended) sin—all the forms are practiced. This group of exercises is called mûfredât (lessons on single and double letters). Under each line is a device representing the word se'y (persevere).

Letters are measured by means of dots made by the fine pen used for sülüs and nesih, or by the thick pen for ta’llik. The teacher may put dots in red ink over the letters to show their proper dimensions, as here and in catalogue number 55, or he may leave these measurements out, as in catalogue numbers 18, 28, 29, and 53.

After finishing each mûfredât meşki, the student begins a mûrekkebât meşki: writing Qur'anic verses, poetry, or aphorisms to learn how to combine letters in words and sentences (see cat. nos. 18, 29, 53, and 55).

This album consists of eleven kit'alar of mûfredât exercises, and two final kit'alar of mûrekkebât exercises.
Muhsinzâde Seyyîd Abdullah Hamdî Bey

1248/1832–1317/1899

Seyyîd Abdullah Hamdî Bey belonged to the Muhsinzâde family, which twice produced a grand vezîr of the Ottoman state. He was born in the Kuruçeşme quarter of Istanbul, on the European shore of the Bosphorus, in 1248/1832 and developed an interest in calligraphy while he was in school. His interest became professional after he took lessons from Kâdiasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi (see cat. nos. 36–37). He attended gatherings hosted by his teacher until the latter’s death in 1293/1876. Muhsinzâde was one of Mustafa İzzet Efendi’s best students.

For a while, Muhsinzâde worked in the Scribal Department (Sadaret Mektubî Kâlemî) of the Central Office of the Ottoman imperial government (the Bâbâlî). Upon the death of Şevki Efendi (see cat. nos. 40–41), he was appointed calligraphy teacher at the Menşe-i Kütâb-ı Askerî (a school for training military scribes), in the Bâyezîd quarter of Istanbul. At that time, Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) conferred on him the title of reisül-hattâtîn, or chief calligrapher. Additionally, he was charged with copying the well-known biography of the Prophet and collection of hadîslar titled al-Shiftâ, by al-Qâdî ‘Iyâd (476/1083–544/1149). He would write one part every day and give lessons at the Menşe-i Kütâb-ı Askerî on Mondays. He spent the rest of his time growing flowers and trees in the garden of his seaside villa. He copied several mushaflar and numerous kitâlar and levhalar. Abdullah Bey is described as a genuine and noble person with an exceptional temperament.

Muhsinzâde Abdullah Bey maintained a close friendship with the calligrapher Şefik Bey (see cat. no. 39) until the latter’s death in 1297/1880. When their teacher Kâdiasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi heard that they frequently met to talk about calligraphy, he advised them, “Those who have nothing to do with calligraphy will get bored with your talk and become hostile to you. In the company of such men, talk about the things they, too, can talk about. Speak of calligraphy only when you are by yourselves.”

Abdullah Bey died on Rebiülâhir 12, 1317/August 20, 1899, and was buried in the hazine (enclosed cemetery) in the Eyüb quarter of Istanbul. The fine inscriptions that he wrote for the entrance to the Haci Köçek Mosque and for its fountain, in the Sultanhamami quarter, can still be seen today.
This prayer handbook consists of selected verses from the Qur’an. It is written in nesih script, thirteen lines per page, on sixteen folios. Muhsinzade Abdullah Bey completed this handbook on Recep 7, 1282/November 26, 1865, in the early part of his artistic career. Shown here are folios 1v and 2r. The unvan sahifesı (opening-page) illumination, on folio 1v, was done by one Ahmed Zihni in a conspicuously Western-influenced style. When compared with earlier works in this catalogue, this piece clearly demonstrates the evolution of Ottoman illumination over the centuries.

The binding is also in a Western-influenced style.
Hâfiz Osman Nuri Efendi lived mostly in Istanbul but from time to time resided in his hometown of Burdur. Aside from his activities as a calligrapher, he taught at primary schools and served as imam for some of the government ministers during Ramazan. It was when he was leading the night prayers on Ramazan 4, 1311/March 11, 1894, that he began to bow and breathed his final breath. He was buried in the Merkez Efendi Cemetery, in Istanbul. The epitaph for his grave was copied by Muhsinzâde. It includes Qur’an 12:12—“Send him [Joseph] with us tomorrow, so he can enjoy himself and play”—the last verse Hâfiz Osman Nuri Efendi had written during his lifetime, in his incomplete 107th mushaf.

Of all Kâdîasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi’s students, two are remembered for their skill at copying the Qur’an. One is Hasan Riza (see cat. no. 56), and the other is Hâfiz Osman Nuri Efendi. Each wrote (although not exclusively) âyet-berkenar Qur’ans, fifteen lines per page, with each page ending at a verse-stop durâk. Copies of these mushaflar were printed in the finest way possible at the time and received wide circulation, especially among students memorizing the Qur’an. Because of the similarity of their names, Kayişzâde Hâfiz Osman Nuri is often confused with the great Hâfiz Osman (see cat. nos. 14–16), although the earlier calligrapher is not known to have written Qur’ans in the âyet-berkenar format.
ÇIRÇIRLI ALİ EFENDİ
D. 1520/1902

Mehmed Ali Efendi was born in a quarter of Istanbul known as Çirçir, or Haydar, and is also known as Haydarlı Ali Efendi. Employed as a clerk in the Ministry of Finance, he studied sülüüs, nesih, and celi sülüüs with Şefik Bey (see cat. no. 39) and won wide admiration with his novel and perfect compositions. He also won the respect of his teacher's teacher, Kâdüşker Mustafa İzzet Efendi (see cat. nos. 36–37).

Few calligraphers have had such a firm hand. With a fine pen and thin paper, Mehmed Ali Efendi used to trace the works of great masters, making his own private record of their writing. These tracings—which were intended as a research tool, and should not be confused with taklid calligraphy—are as sharp and fine as a strand of human hair. Ali Efendi could trace even such tiny scripts as nesih, winning no small acclaim.

Another aspect of Ali Efendi’s success at taklid is worth noting. He would say to his students one day, “Today, let us be Râkım.” And on that day they would follow the method of Mustafa Râkım (see cat. no. 27). On another day he would say, “Today, let us be Celâleddin.” And they would write that day in the style of Mahmud Celâleddin (see cat. nos. 32–33). Ali Efendi’s ability to write in these two sharply divergent styles is a mark of his great talent.

After living his life with the simplicity of a dervish, Ali Efendi died and was buried in the Karacaahmed Cemetery, in the Üsküdar district of Istanbul, but the site of his grave is no longer known. His epitaph, which has been preserved although it was not cut into stone, gives the date of his death as Rebiüllevvel 30, 1520/July 7, 1902.

44. Levha
Istanbul, 1297/1880
Celî sülüüs
Ink and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
50.5 × 49.7 cm (19½ × 19½ in.)
(68)

The text of this levha is a poem in Ottoman Turkish:

I held fast to the skirt of purity
and God’s pleasure forever.
I embraced the dust of the
Prophet’s feet forever.
Perplexed and powerless was my
response to the unexpected.
I found shelter in the court of
God’s grace forever.

Ali Efendi was the consummate follower of the method of Kâdüşker Mustafa İzzet Efendi and Şefik Bey. In this piece, each line is composed in a harmonious way, giving the whole extraordinary elegance. The levha was written in 1297/1880. The decoration of the borders reflects the taste of the age.
HACI ÂRİF EFENDÎ
1246/1830–1327/1909

Ahmed Ârif Efendi was born in Filibe, the present-day city of Plovdiv, in southern Bulgaria, in 1246/1830. Alongside his religious schooling, he studied sülüs and nesih with a local calligrapher by the name of İsmail Sâbir, from whom he received his içâzet. In 1293/1876, as the Ottomans began to withdraw from Rumelia (the European provinces of the empire), and massacres of Bulgarian Muslims ensued, Ârif Efendi fled to Istanbul and settled there. He opened a grocery store in the Sarayhane quarter, and for that reason is known more commonly as Bakkal (the Grocer) Ârif Efendi than as Filibeli Ârif Efendi.

When Şevki Efendi (see cat. nos. 40–41) saw the calligraphy that Ârif Efendi had written before coming to Istanbul, he encouraged Ârif Efendi to continue with the art. As a student of this exceptional master, Ârif Efendi began the study of calligraphy all over again, from the beginning. He studied with zeal and, with a masterful hilye, earned a second içâzet in 1301/1883. He abandoned the grocery trade and began teaching calligraphy in the medrese (Islamic theological school) of the Nuruosmanîye Mosque and at his home. Among the hundreds of students he taught, the finest was Şeyh Azizûr Rîfâmî (1288/1871–1355/1934), who himself taught for ten years in Cairo, thus ensuring the spread of Şevki Efendi’s method throughout the Islamic world.

Ârif Efendi suffered a stroke and spent the last five years of his life paralyzed. He died on Ramazan 2, 1327/September 17, 1909, and was buried in the Edirnekapı Cemetery, Istanbul, near the grave of the calligrapher İsmail Zâhîdî (see cat. no. 26).

Hacı Ârif Efendi left countless examples of his writing in sülüs and nesih: meşkler, kutâlar, murakkâalar, hilyeler, many evrââlar (personal prayers), and copies of the Delâilu’l-Hayrât. His levhalar in celi sülüs are also numerous. The besmele he wrote for the facade of the left-hand gate of the Şehzâde Mosque is highly regarded. Among his less-familiar works are celi sülüs epitaphs written not with a stencil to guide the stonemason but in ink applied directly to the stone.

45. Qur’an
Filibe, before 1293/1876

Nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 17.7 × 12.2 cm (6 1/4 × 4 3/4 in.)
(272)

Shown here are folios 124v and 125r of an ayet-berkenar Qur’an written on 311 folios by Filibeli Haci Ahmed Ârif Efendi. Mushaflar written by Ottoman calligraphers usually have eleven, thirteen, fifteen, or seventeen lines per page, although the most common format is thirteen lines. The ayet-berkenar format has fifteen lines per page; each page begins at the beginning of an ayet (verse) and ends with the completion of another. When and with whom this format originated is unclear. The arrangement is useful in memorization but presents a problem for the calligrapher. In order to fit the verses on the page exactly, the calligrapher must tightly space the letters on some lines of text and loosely space those on other lines. The ayet-berkenar format thus prevents the calligrapher from doing his best work, and for that reason the great masters did not use it. Only two masters of nesih script—Kayışâde Osman Nuri Efendi (see cat. no. 43) and Hasan Ruza Efendi (see cat. no. 56)—successfully wrote the Qur’an this way. The tight and loose spacing characteristic of this format are visible in their Qur’âns.

The date this mushaf was copied is not mentioned in the colophon. While the nesih script is sharp and clear, it does not meet the standard of this calligrapher’s second teacher, Şevki Efendi, which suggests that this mushaf was written before Ârif Efendi fled to
Istanbul in 1295/1876 and began studying with Şevki Efendi. After he became a follower of Şevki Efendi’s method, Ârif Efendi’s writing approached perfection.

This volume was illuminated in a provincial style by a man from Filibe called Derviş.
Haci Ârif Bey
D. 1310/1892

Haci Mehmed Ârif Bey was born in Istanbul, where he lived in the Çarşamba neighborhood, in the Fatih district; he became known as Çarşambaçlı Ârif Bey. Despite the similarity of their names, Çarşambaçlı Ârif Bey should not be confused with his contemporary Filibeli (or Bakkal) Haci Ârif Efendi (see cat. no. 45).

Çarşambaçlı Ârif Bey studied sülüs and nesih with Hâşim Efendi (d. 1261/1845), a student of Mustafa Râkım’s (see cat. no. 27). He studied ta’lîk with Kâbrisizâde Ismail Hakkı Efendi (1200/1785–1279/1862) and Ali Haydar Bey (1217/1802–1287/1870). Ârif Bey wrote beautiful compositions in celi sülüs in Râkım’s style, and ta’lîk in the style of Yesârîzâde Mustafa İzzet Efendi (d. 1265/1849). He also made elegant mirror-image compositions (müsemmâ) and was famous for his ability to attribute authorship of unsigned calligraphic works. In celi sülüs, celi ta’lîk, and the tuğra, he achieved the same level of artistic success as his contemporary Sâmi Efendi (see cat. nos. 49–52). Indeed, during their lifetimes, there was no perceptible difference in the quality of their work. But because of Ârif Bey’s early death, his work was eclipsed by that of Sâmi Efendi, who was blessed with two more decades of artistically productive life.

Ârif Bey died in 1310/1892 and was buried in the Yâvedûd Cemetery, in Defterdar.

46. Levha
Istanbul, 1301/1884

Celî sülüs
Colors on paper mounted on cardboard
53 × 72.2 cm (20½ × 28½ in.)
(65)

A yellow paint was used in place of gold in this celi sülüs composition, which was prepared by an illuminator using a stencil made by Ârif Bey. Many of Ârif Bey’s levhalar were prepared in this manner. The text reads: “In it [the holy precinct of Mecca] are the clear signs [of God’s governance] and the place where Abraham stood to pray” (Qur’an 3:97). The calligraphy takes an elliptical form, the result of the artist’s laying out the letters in their most logical and legible positions. This elliptical istif (composition) is placed within a rectangular frame and finished with floral bouquets in the European mode. The equilibrium of the composition is emphasized by the strong verticals of the six elif letters, which divide the istif into seven strips, giving the whole an elegant appearance.
فأ 표현 ما يمهد معا

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Born in the Süleymaniye district of Istanbul in 1249/1833, Yahya Hilmi Efendi learned sülüs and nesih first from Mehmed Hâşim Efendi (d. 1261/1845), a pupil of Mustafa Râkim's (see cat. no. 27). When his master died, Yahya Hilmi Efendi began studying with Halil Zühdi Efendi, receiving his icâzet in 1263/1847. As a young man, he worked in the Memorandum Department (Jurnal Kalemi) of the Office of the Ministry of War (Bâb-ı Seraskerî), and eventually rose to become the department's director. After serving there for nearly sixty years, he was stricken by paralysis, which led to his leaving office and, eventually, to his death. He died on Şevval 17, 1325/November 23, 1907, and was buried in the hazire (enclosed cemetery) of the Süleymaniye Mosque. His granddaughter, the painter Güzin Duran (1898–1981), and her husband, the painter Feyhaman Duran (1886–1970), donated Yahya Hilmi Efendi's wooden house—painted red ocher, a favored color in Ottoman domestic architecture—to the University of Istanbul. The house remains as it was in Yahya's time, with all its historical artifacts, levhalâr, and paintings intact.

Like the nineteenth-century masters Kâdiâsker Mustafa İzzet Efendi (see cat. nos. 36–37) and Şevki Efendi (see cat. nos. 40–41), Yahya Hilmi Efendi is an unforgettable master of the nesih script. During his artistic career, he wrote twenty-five mushaflar (the last of which he completed only up to the twenty-first căz) and countless other works, including Enâmâr, copies of the Delâilü'l-Hayrât, evrâdlar (personal prayers), thirty-volume Qur'ans, hîyeler, and levhalâr. Hilmi Efendi was famous for his speed of execution, delicacy of touch.

The following anecdote illustrates his swiftness: in his youth, Yahya Hilmi Efendi was preparing to go on the pilgrimage to Mecca, and his mother asked to accompany him. He did not have enough money to pay for two, so, beginning on the first day of Ramazan, he began to write a mushaf: He worked night and day, completing half a căz by daylight and another half after dark. By the time of the Şeker Bayramı festival at the end of Ramazan, he had finished all thirty căzler. His mother sold the mushaf to a wealthy man for 7,500 kuruş (about $5,500), approximately what it costs one person traveling first-class from Istanbul to make the pilgrimage today—over fifteen days rather than the three to four months customary in Yahya Hilmi Efendi's time). With this money, mother and son were able to go on the pilgrimage together. In his last years, however, Yahya Hilmi Efendi would write one or two pages of a mushaf a day, taking about a year and a half to finish the volume.

47. Qur'ân
Istanbul, 1506/1889

Nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 22.2×14.2 cm (8 ¾×5 ⅞ in.)
(316)

This mushaf was written in 1506/1889, thirteen lines per page, in nesih script. It is written on 406 folios. A detail of folio 404v is shown here; the text runs from the end of the second verse of chapter 108 through most of chapter 110. Like Mustafa İzzet and Mehmed Şevki, Yahya Hilmi Efendi wrote nesih with an élan for which he became famous. One cannot help admiring the flow of these lines.

The illuminator was Bahaddin Tokatlıoğlu (1285/1866–1358/1939). Born in Istanbul, Mehmed Bahaddin Efendi was the son of a professional illuminator and bookbinder who had studied with Lâleli Şükir Efendi, one of the master illuminators of the nineteenth century. During the course of his artistic career, Bahaddin Efendi trained many students and illuminated nearly twenty Qur'ans and Enâm-ı Şerîf; as well as numerous hîyeler and levhalâr. He was an excellent gilder of zer-endûd levhalâr. "In the old days, I considered myself an illuminator and walked around full of pride," he once remarked. "When I became familiar with the works in the palace of my predecessors, I learned my true place."

Bahaddin Efendi added to the mushaf's effect with his application of gleaming gold in the border frames—adding material rays of light to the spiritual light of the Qur'an. Bahaddin Efendi also bound the volume.

Opposite: Detail, folio 404v
HĀFIZ TAHŞİN EFENDİ
1267/1851–1334/1915

The full name of this calligrapher was Elhac Hāfiz Hasan Tahsin Efendi. He was born in 1267/1851 in the north-central Anatolian city of Tokat, where he began his study of calligraphy. He moved to Istanbul in 1284/1867 and studied sāliṣ and nesh with the current reisü'l-hattātın, Muhsinzade Abdullah Bey (see cat. no. 42), from whom he received his icāzet. He also studied with his teacher’s teacher, Kâdiasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi (see cat. nos. 36–37).

When construction of the Ali Paşa Mosque in the Bâyezîd quarter was finished in 1286/1869, Hāfiz Tahsin Efendi was appointed imam and hatib (preacher). He continued in this function for forty-five years, during which time he also taught in various schools. In addition, he was appointed deputy director of the Bâyezîd Public Library when it opened in 1301/1884. He served there for twenty-nine years, eventually becoming director and preparing a catalogue of the library’s fifteen thousand volumes.

A person of high moral character, Tahsin Efendi was familiar with music and had a personal collection of valuable manuscripts, calligraphic works, and calligrapher’s tools. He wrote some 120 Qur’ans and other works during the course of his life. He died on Safer 5, 1334/December 13, 1915, and was buried in the cemetery of the Kaşgârî Sufi Lodge in the Eyüb district of Istanbul.

48. Qur’an
Istanbul, 1512/1894

Nesh
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
Binding 35.6 × 24.4 cm (13¾ × 9¼ in.)

(352)
In reading the Qur’an to oneself, it is customary to use a single volume, but when handwritten Qur’ans were in use, it was not economical to have a complete Qur’an for each reader. Instead, the Qur’an was often separated into thirty cizler (sections), each approximately twenty pages in length, allowing thirty people to read the Qur’an simultaneously.

The large Qur’an shown here was originally written as a thirty-volume Qur’an, in 1512/1894. After it was illuminated, in 1532/1904, it was, for whatever reason, bound as a single volume. The format is thirteen lines per page, on 562 folios. It is written in a pleasant and readable nesh.

Osman Yümnî Efendi illuminated the work, using rather garish nineteenth-century design elements. (Osman Yümnî was born in the eastern Black Sea city of Trabzon. He worked as an illuminator in Istanbul, where he produced much work of less than top quality. He died in 1537/1919.) The pages shown here, folios iv and 2r, are the serlevha of the volume. The remaining twenty-nine cizler begin with the usual unvan sahifesî (single illuminated opening page), and the chapter headings are in white-lead ink over a gold background.
Sâmi Efendi
1253/1838–1330/1912

Mehmed Sâmi Efendi was born in Istanbul on Zilhicce 16, 1253/ March 13, 1838. His father was Hacı Mahmud Efendi, known as Yorgancular Kethûdasi, or steward of the quilt-makers' guild. Mehmed Sâmi received his schooling at the Sibyan Mektebi (elementary school) and, at the age of sixteen, was employed as a clerk in the Finance Department. Later, he worked as a writer of correspondence in the Imperial Council of State (Dâvân-ı Hümâyûn) and as a junior clerk in the Department of Imperial Medals and Medallions. He ultimately became chief clerk in that office, a position he retained until his retirement in 1327/1909, shortly after the 1908 restoration of the constitution.

Sâmi Efendi learned sülüs and nesih from a local teacher named Boğnak Osman Efendi and celi sülüs from Recâi Efendi (1218/1804– 1291/1874), a pupil of Mustafa Râkim’s (see cat. no. 27). The divânî and celi divânî scripts and tuğra writing he learned from Nâşih Efendi (see cat. no. 70); ta’lîk from Kıbrîszâde İsmail Hakkî Efendi (1200/1785–1279/1862); celi ta’lîk from Ali Haydar Bey (1217/1802– 1287/1870); and rik’a from Mümtaz Efendi (1225/1810–1287/1871). With his native talent, he mastered all these scripts.

Sâmi’s artistic individuality was in particular evidence in his celi works. Indeed, he was so proficient in the celi scripts that he could write them with a lead pencil rather than a reed pen. Meticulous by nature, he kept working on some pieces for years, correcting and improving them until they emerged as masterpieces, eliciting the wonder of all. He followed the style of Râkim in celi sülüs and the tuğra, and the style of Yesârîzâde (d. 1265/1849) in celi ta’lîk—and excelled at both. After 1310/1893, the influence of İsmail Zühdi (see cat. no. 26) begins to show in Sâmi Efendi’s works in celi sülüs.

There are few works by Sâmi Efendi in lampblack ink. Most of his works were done first on black paper, using ink made from orpiment. He corrected the pieces later, when opportunity arose, and then made stencils from them. The top illuminators of the day vied for the chance to gild the works produced with these stencils. Indeed, Sâmi’s greatest achievements—those that account for his dominance and influence—are his works in gold, which show off most admirably the magnificence of his art. Foremost among these are the levhalar in celi that can be seen in Istanbul in the Gihangir and Altunizâde mosques, as well as in other mosques and museums. Among his inscriptions in stone are those on the sebil (public fountain) of the Yeni Cami (New Mosque). His twelve lines of celi sülüs there have become a model for other calligraphers. Also worth seeing are Sâmi’s works in the Şehzâde Mosque, the Nalli Maşjid in Bâbâhî, the gates of the Covered Bazaar, the Zihni Paşa Mosque, and the Galip Paşa Mosque in Erenköy. (The inscriptions in the last three buildings are in celi ta’lîk.) Sâmi also left many inscriptions on gravestones.

49. Levha
Istanbul, 1297/1880
Celî sülüs
Gold on painted cardboard
49 × 75 cm (19⅛ × 29½ in.)
(120)

Sâmi Efendi is considered to have reached the highest degree of mastery ever in the scripts of celî sülüs, celî ta’lîk, divânî, and celî divânî, and in the tuğra. He wrote this levha, dated 1297/1880, in celî sülüs. Its text is the famous Nazar Ayeti (Verse of the Stare):

"It is almost as if those who reject [God] would stab you [Muhammad] with their staves when they hear the Remembrance [the Qur’an] and say, ‘Truly, he [Muhammad] is insane’" (Qur’an 68:51). The chapter of the Qur’an from which the verse is taken is called Kalem, or The Pen.

Sâmi Efendi had a rare innate grasp of aesthetic principles and constantly progressed in the art. Although others considered him extraordinarily successful, Sâmi Efendi was never satisfied. He was always improving, so that his work in any one year was superior to his work the year before.

This levha was produced from a stencil by Sâmi Efendi, using the zerendâm process. In both content and quality, it is an exquisite example of his artistry during the middle of his career. The illumination is contemporary with the calligraphy.
Among Sâmi Efendi's students are the following calligraphers, who demonstrate his success as a teacher: Hulûsî Efendi (see cat. no. 53); Nazif Bey (see cat. nos. 54–55); Hasan Ruza Efendi (see cat. no. 56); Kâmil Efendi (see cat. no. 57); Tuğrakeş Hakkı Bey (see cat. no. 58); Aziz Efendi (1288/1871–1353/1934); Ömer Vâfı Efendi (1297/1880–1347/1928); Necmeddin Efendi (see cat. nos. 59–60); and Emin Efendi (1300/1883–1364/1945).

While Sâmi Efendi taught calligraphy at the Imperial Council and at the Imperial Palace Service (Enderûn-i Hümâyûn), he would also hold calligraphy lessons at his home each Tuesday. Among friends, he was known for his easy manners and witticisms. Late in life, he was stricken with paralysis. He died on Recep 16, 1350/July 1, 1912, and was buried in the hazîre (enclosed cemetery) of the Fatih Mosque, Istanbul. The calligraphy for his gravestone was written by his pupil Kâmil Efendi.

50. Tuğra
Istanbul, 1298/1881
Gold on painted cardboard
73.5 x 90.5 cm (28 3/8 x 35 3/8 in.)

Sâmi Efendi wrote this perfect example of the imperial tuğra of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909). It reads: *Abdülhamid Han bîn Abdülmeccid* (Sultan Abdülhamid, son of Abdülmeccid), followed by the customary phrase *el-muzaffer dâimâ* (the ever-victorious). The tuğra bears the date 1298/1881.

The components of the tuğra are shown in figure 20 on page 57 of this volume. Using the width of the kârsî as a unit, one can measure the rest of the tuğra. The outer oval is one unit wide; the kârsî is one unit high; and, from the bend, the kol is one unit long. The complete tuğra is two units high and three units wide. The tuğra shown here exemplifies these aesthetic and mathematical proportions.

Sâmi Efendi lived through the reigns of six sultans, from that of Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808–39; see cat. no. 34) to that of Sultan Mehmed V (Reşad; r. 1909–18). He designed the tuğralar for Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1861–76), Sultan Abdülhamid II, and Sultan Reşad. Because the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II lasted thirty-three years, the tuğralar Sâmi Efendi wrote for him reached aesthetic perfection. The tuğra shown here was prepared by a mûzeühîb (illuminator) from a stencil by Sâmi Efendi, using the *zer-endûd* process. Its narrow outer border is decorated with motifs popular at the time. In the upper right quadrant is a small bouquet, in the place where the title of the sultan usually appeared. Later tuğralar of Abdülhamid II have the title el-Gâzi (champion of Islam) written, in cellî sülüs, in this quadrant.
51. **Levha**  
Istanbul, 1518/1900  
*Celli sütüs*  
Gold and color on painted cardboard  
60.8 x 127.5 cm (23 3/4 x 49 3/4 in.)  
(47)

In figure 17 on page 50 is a *kaşık* (stencil) of a *celli sütüs levha*, written in orpiment ink on brown paper, with tiny holes tracing the outlines of the letters. The *levha* here, which shows Sâmi Efendi’s art at its apex, was produced from that same stencil, using the *zer-endâd* process. It was written in 1518/1900 and painted by the illuminator Bahaddin Efendi (see cat. no. 47). An attractive secondary composition in the center—a roundish area of smaller *celli sütüs*—completes the text, which is a popular saying of unknown origin: “God is the bestower of success, the best Patron, and the best Companion.” In this *levha*, it is not only the beautifully composed letters but also the finely rendered vowels, reading and other signs, date, and signature (*ketehbât Sâmi, or Sâmi wrote it*) that give the piece distinction. This magnificent *levha*, written at the dawn of the twentieth century, is just as new and fresh as we approach the twenty-first.

Sâmi Efendi, whose art was highly regarded during his lifetime, used to tell his students this anecdote from his youth: “One day I had brought home some large chunks of wood to heat my house and left them in the garden. I needed someone to split them into pieces small enough for the stove, but whom could I find? At that very moment, who should pass by but an old hunchbacked man, carrying an ax over his shoulder. I thought to myself, Such an elderly man could hardly manage to cut such big pieces of wood. But there was no one else around, so I called to him to offer him the job. ‘Father,’ I called, ‘can you split this wood?’ ‘Very well, son,’ said the old man, coming into the garden. Curious how he was going to handle the job, I went to the window and watched. The old fellow carefully studied the first piece, selected a certain spot on it, struck the spot with his ax, and split the wood into many usable small pieces. He then proceeded to do the same with each log. Amazed, I called him inside to pay him and offer him a cup of coffee for refreshment. I confessed that I had not really believed he could do the job, but, seeing such fine results, I wanted to know his secret. ‘Son, what do you mean?’ the old man asked. ‘I dream every night until morning about splitting firewood.’ That one sentence slaked my curiosity, for I remembered that, in my early years as a calligrapher, I would sometimes have difficulty fitting a certain letter into a composition and become anxious. But whenever that happened, my late teacher would appear in my dreams that night and explain the solution to my problem. I would immediately awaken, light my candle, and write down the solution on the paper I always kept at my bedside. In the morning, thanks to this explanation, every letter would find its proper place in the composition.”

When he told his students this story, Sâmi Efendi would add, “Know that if you do not practice your art, your profession, even in your dreams, you will not make progress.”
Levha
Istanbul, 1519/1901
Celî ta‘lîk
Gold on painted cardboard
49.5 × 116.9 cm (19¼ × 45¾ in.)
(62)

This exceptional example of Ottoman celî ta‘lîk was written in 1519/1901.
Bahaddin Efendi (see cat. no. 47) produced this zer-endûd levha using
Sâmi Efendi’s stencil of the piece. The levha was decorated according to the
tastes of the time. The text is a hadîs
of arguable authenticity: “The one who
works and profits is loved by God.” A
larger version of this work was written by
Sâmi Efendi and produced as an
inscription cut in stone above the gate
of the Covered Market, Istanbul. It can
still be seen, as can his tugra—similar
to the tugra in catalogue number 50—
on another gate of the same market.

Sâmi Efendi received his icâzet in
ta‘lîk calligraphy from Kibrîşîzâde
Ismail Hakki Efendi in 1274/1857. But
Hakki Efendi’s artistry lagged behind
that of Ali Haydar Bey. Seeing the
young Sâmi Efendi’s work, Ali Haydar
sent him a message saying, “Like
your teacher, I studied with Yesârîzâde
Mustafa İzzet Efendi—and I was an
abler student. I have seen your writing
here and there. You have, thanks to
God, a great ability. Come, let us
discuss calligraphy together.”

In fairness to his teacher, Sâmi
Efendi did not feel he could respond to
this invitation. But when Ismail Hakki
Efendi died, Sâmi Efendi went to Ali
Haydar’s house after the funeral and
knocked on the door. “My son,” said
Ali Haydar Bey, “for some time I have
been sending messages to you. Where
have you been?” Sâmi Efendi replied,
“If my teacher Ismail Hakki Efendi
heard that I was augmenting my studies
with you, he might have been hurt, so I
could not come. But today we committed
him to God’s mercy, and I ran straight
to you. At last you are my master.”

Years later, Sâmi Efendi related
this story to his own students, saying,
“Only death can separate a teacher
from his student. If I had abandoned
my teachers, their spiritual power
could not have enlightened my work.”
The son of Hâfiz Mustafa Efendi, who was a public lecturer at the Fatih Mosque and a teacher at the Dârülsafaka School (a boarding school established for orphans), Mehmed Hülûsi was born on Muharram 15, 1286/April 27, 1869, in the Çarşamba quarter of Istanbul. In the course of his primary education, he committed the entire Qur’an to memory. He also attended lessons at the mosque until he was appointed muezzin at the Sultan Selim I Mosque, a position he held until his death.

Hülûsi Efendi learned the sülist and nesih scripts from Muhsinâde Abdullah (see cat. no. 42). He began studying ta’lik with Hasan Hüsnü Efendi (d. 1353/1914) and completed his studies with Çarşanbaclı Haci Arif Bey (see cat. no. 46). His real master in the art, however, was Sâmi Efendi (see cat. nos. 49–52). He was appointed calligraphy teacher at the Dârülsafaka School and began teaching ta’lik and celi ta’lik at the Calligraphers College (Medresetüllâhattâtın) as soon as it opened, in 1352/1914. When the Arabic alphabet was committed to the Latin one in 1347/1928, and the school was closed, Hülûsi Efendi was appointed chief custodian of mausoleums. He died on Zilkade 27, 1355/January 8, 1940, and was buried in the Edirnekapı Cemetery in an unmarked grave.

Apart from Hülûsi Efendi’s mastery of the sülist, nesih, and celi sülist scripts, he was among the best calligraphers in ta’lik and celi ta’lik. His kü’alar in nesta’lik in the Iranian style, and his kü’alar, hilyeler, and celi ta’lik levhalar in the Turkish style, are still worthy of recognition. The years between 1320/1902 and 1345/1927 were the most brilliant in his career, but his late works, produced when he was suffering from illness and poverty, do not do justice to his genius. A fine example of his celi ta’lik is the levha shown in figure 12 on page 17.

Masterpieces by Hülûsi Efendi are in museums and private collections. His works can also be found at the Sultan Selim I and Sultan Ahmed mosques, Sultan Selim I’s tomb, and the Vakif Gürabâ Hospital, Istanbul, and in the First Parliament Building, Ankara. In Cairo, he wrote the frieze containing the Ezân-ı Muhammedi (call to prayer) that adorns the Mosque of Prince Muhammad ‘Ali Pasha, in the Mayyala Palace.

Hülûsi Efendi was a man of saintly and exemplary character. Foremost among his students in ta’lik were Mustafa Halim Özyazıcı (1315/1898–1384/1964); Mâcid Ayral (1308/1891–1380/1961); Hâmid Aytaç (1309/1891–1402/1982); and Kemal Batanay (1309/1891–1401/1981).

53. Murakkaa
Istanbul, 1322/1904
Ta’lik
Ink and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
Binding 25.5×17.4 cm (9¾ × 6¾ in.)
(52a)

Ottoman meşkler (teaching exercises) in the ta’lik script were, like exercises in other scripts, divided into two phases: first came the individual letters and alphabetically arranged combinations of two letters, called the müfredât; The advanced exercises were called the mürekkebât. In these exercises, the novice would learn to compose words and arrange them properly along a horizontal line.

This meşk album was written in 1322/1904. The text in this advanced ta’lik lesson is an ode on the besmele written by the great Persian Sufi poet ‘Abd al-Rahmân Mullâ Jânmî (817/1414–898/1492), which was frequently used for mürekkebât exercises. (Like all calligraphy teachers, Mehmed Hülûsi Yazgan wrote the same text repeatedly for his students.) The first two kü’alar of this körücklü murakkaa (bellows album), shown here, contain the first four lines of the ode. The device for the exhortation sa’yy (persevere) is written under each line of text. Hülûsi Efendi liked to use a thin, watery ink, as in this example, allowing the viewer to follow the flow of ink from the reed pen and emphasizing the beauty of the pen strokes.
Crimean in origin, Nazif was born in 1262/1846 in the city of Rusçuk (now Ruse, Bulgaria). His father, Mustafa Efendi, brought him to Istanbul, where he was trained in the Imperial Palace Service (Enderûn-ı Hümâyûn) of the Ottoman court. He studied sülüs and nesih first with Şefik Bey (see cat. no. 39) and then with Abdülahad Vahdet Efendi (1248/1832–1315/1895), a student of Abdullah Zühdi’s (see cat. no. 38). He studied ta’lîk, celi divâni, the tuğra, and celi sülüs with Sâmi Efendi (see cat. nos. 49–52). It is said that while Sâmi Efendi was grieving over the death of his friend Çarşanbali Arif Bey (see cat. no. 46), he saw the work of Nazif Bey and consoled himself, saying, “God has taken Arif and put Nazif in his place.” For his part, Nazif Bey used to say, “Only after meeting Sâmi Efendi did I begin to untangle the secrets of calligraphy.”

In his youth, Nazif Bey engaged in the sport of wrestling. To keep up the strength in his hands and arms, he would chop wood at every opportunity. (Calligraphers employed various methods to protect their hands from fatigue. Şevki Efendi [see cat. nos. 40–41] used to put his writing hand inside his jacket, in the gap between buttons, to cushion his hand when he was out walking.)

Nazif Bey worked as a calligrapher in the General Staff Department (Erkân-ı Harbiye Dâresi), where he was noted for his ability to stretch short place names to fill large spaces on lithographed maps. One of the great calligraphers, he spent his life producing superb works in all the scripts, from the smallest and most delicate to the largest celi. Although he wrote an elegant nesih, he unfortunately never found time or opportunity to write a Qur’an. His work is most frequently seen in celi sülüs and celi ta’lîk levhalar; or in inscriptions cut in stone. Examples of the latter include inscriptions on the Orhânîye barracks, the Yıldız clock tower, and the Harbiye dining hall, all in Istanbul. He was also skilled at making camel-hide puppets for the famous Karagöz shadow plays.

Nazif Bey died from a heart ailment on Rebi‘ullevel 29, 1351/ March 8, 1913, and was buried in the Yahya Efendi Cemetery, in the Beşiktaş quarter of Istanbul.
55. Murakkaa
Istanbul, late 19th–early 20th century
Ta’līk
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
Binding 31.6 × 25.2 cm (12 3/8 × 9 in.)
(226)

For the text of mūrekkebāt exercises in
Ottoman ta’līk, some calligraphers used
the ode Hilye-i Hākānî, a description of the Prophet by Hākānî Mehmed
Bey (d. 1015/1606), in place of the
Persian ode in catalogue number 55.
In this work, Haci Nazif Bey wrote the
Hilye-i Hākānî as a twenty-four-kat‘a
ta’līk mūrekkebāt meşki album. The
nineteenth and twentieth kat‘alar are
shown here.

Nazif Bey wrote this album as a
taklid (imitation; see cat. no. 55) based
on an original by Yesârızāde Mustafa
İzet Efendi (d. 1265/1849). While Nazif
Bey used red ink for the measurement
dots (Yesârızāde used the same ink as
for the text), Nazif Bey’s meşk exactly
reflects the method of Yesârızāde,
who perfected the rules for Ottoman
ta’līk that had been formulated by his
father, Yesârı Mehmed Es’ad Efendi
(see cat. no. 28).

The verses on these two kat‘alar
describe the Prophet’s eyebrows:

His moonlike forehead brings to
mind the Qur’an chapter of victory,

His long eyebrows like its besmele.

With however much subtlety,
Critics cannot convey

How the eyebrows of the Prophet
are like the indicator of God’s unity.

They look like two drawn swords.
God the Transcendent has created
his beauty.

The crescent is the ultimate of the
moon’s beauty.

The device for the exhortation
ma‘y (persevere) is written under each
line of calligraphy.
Hasan Riza Efendi
1265/1849-1338/1920

When one thinks of Ottoman calligraphers of nesih in the last century, Hasan Riza’s name is the first that comes to mind. He was especially known for his mushaflar, which were reprinted again and again and made him famous throughout the Islamic world.

Hasan Riza was born in 1265/1849 in the Üsküdar quarter of Istanbul. He studied calligraphy with Yahya Hilmi Efendi (see cat. no. 47) but left to accompany his father, Nazif Efendi, and the rest of the family to Turnova (now Veliko Tūrnovo, Bulgaria) when his father was appointed post-office director in that city. When the family returned to Istanbul in 1282/1865, Hasan Riza enrolled in the Imperial College of Music (Müşika-i Hümâyûn), a teaching institution for the Imperial Brass Band, and began studying sülüs and nesih with Şefik Bey (see cat. no. 39), the calligraphy teacher there. He obtained his icâzet from Şefik Bey but also benefited from associations with Kâdâsker Mustafa İzzet Efendi (see cat. nos. 36–37), Şefik Bey’s teacher, and with Sâmi Efendi (see cat. nos. 49–52), from whom Hasan Riza learned ta’llik.

In 1288/1871, Hasan Riza was appointed imam of the Imperial College of Music, and when Şefik Bey retired in 1296/1879, he replaced him as calligraphy master at the college. When the Calligraphers College (Medresetülhâtâtîn) was opened on Recep 6, 1332/May 31, 1914, he was appointed its master of sülüs and nesih but had to give up the job when his eyesight began to fail. He died on Cemâziyelâhir 10, 1358/March 2, 1920, and was buried in the Rumelihisarı Cemetery, in Istanbul.

Hasan Riza Efendi did his best work between 1300/1883 and 1330/1912, creating a number of exquisite large hîyeler. He was particularly adept in sülüs. He also produced works in ta’llik and celli sülüs, but his greatest achievement was in nesih (he left nineteen mushaflar in that script).

The nineteenth century was the heyday of the hîyle in Ottoman art, with masters such as Hasan Riza Efendi producing fine examples. Hasan Riza Efendi was the last to follow Kâdâsker Mustafa İzzet Efendi’s custom of writing large-size hîyeler. In order to extend his hîyeler, Hasan Riza often added a lower line in celli sülüs: “If it were not for you, if it were not for you [Muhammad], I [God] would not have created the heavens.” This text is considered a hadîs kudüsi, or holy hadîs, in which God speaks in the Prophet’s words. (In the Qur’an, by contrast, the words come directly from God, with Muhammad as the vehicle of transmission; a regular hadîs consists entirely of the words and opinions of the Prophet.) This hîyle includes this extra line of celli sülüs as its bottom line.

The work was written in Şa’ban 1325/October 1905, at the height of Hasan Riza Efendi’s artistic powers. The illumination, unfortunately, is in the questionable taste of the time.

The durâklar (stops) between the sentences have an unusual feature. Here, and on some other large hîyeler by Hasan Riza, each durâk consists of a small lithographic print of a calligraphic composition of the Muslim profession of faith—“There is no divinity except God, and Muhammad is His Prophet”—surrounded by the sentence “O Muhammad, your name is Victorious, so look wherever you will, you will be victorious and succeed.”

(This text is associated with Muhammad’s being the “Seal of Prophets”—the last prophet.) These small circular compositions were cut out and pasted onto the levha and then illuminated around the edges.

56. Hîyle
Istanbul, 1325/1905
Celli sülüs and nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
107 x 73 cm (41 3/4 x 28 1/4 in.)
(113)
Ahmed Kâmil Efendi was born on Cemâziyelevard 26, 1278/November 29, 1861, in the Fındıklı quarter of Istanbul. In elementary school, he began studying with the calligraphy teacher Süleyman Efendi. When he graduated from high school, he was appointed to the accounts office of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Meanwhile, he had begun learning the sülüs and nesih scripts from Sâmi Efendi (see cat. nos. 49–52). Four years later, in 1301/1884, at Sâmi Efendi’s request, he wrote a hilye that became his icâzetnâme. When he was transferred to the clerical office of the chancery of the Imperial Council of State (Divân-ı Hümâyûn), his calligraphy master suggested that he change his pen name from Kâmil to Hâşim—which would make for an easier and more attractive signature. For a few years thereafter, his works are signed Ahmed Hâşim, but he later returned to his original name.

While at the Imperial Council of State, he learned from Sâmi Efendi to write divânî and celi divânî and to design the tugra, and was appointed writer of correspondence. When his master retired, Kâmil Efendi took his place and became chief clerk in the Department of Imperial Medals and Medallions at the Imperial Council of State, where he taught the hutût-i mütenevvia—all the scripts then in use. After the Calligraphers College (Medresetülhâtâtîn) was opened in 1352/1914, he worked there as a professor of sülüs and nesih. He also taught rk’a at the Galata Sarayı Sultanisi School, starting in 1357/1918. In 1541/1922, the Central Office (Bâbîîli) of the imperial government was abolished, as was his position at the Imperial Council of State. He continued to work at the Calligraphers College until that, too, was abolished with the change from the Arabic to the Latin alphabet. In 1555/1936, he became professor of calligraphy at the Academy of Fine Arts (now Mimar Sinan University), where he remained until his death, producing a rich body of work. He was invited to visit Egypt twice—first in 1551/1933 and again in 1558/1940—and during both stays produced many works, including several calligraphic pieces that can be seen in Cairo’s Mosque of Prince Muhammad ‘Alî Pasha, in the Manyal Palace, and in the palace’s calligraphy exhibition room.

Haci Kâmil Akdik died on the evening of Cemâziyelâhiir 29, 1560/July 23, 1941, at his home in the Gelenbevî section of the Fatih quarter of Istanbul and was buried in the Gümüsuyu Cemetery, in Eyübi. He was the last man to win the title of reisü’l-hattâtîn, or chief calligrapher, a title given to the senior and most knowledgeable calligrapher in the Ottoman state. He earned this honor on Şevval 10, 1333/August 21, 1915.

Haci Kâmil continued to work until the last days of his life, retaining his sureness of touch and power of vision to the end. He left a substantial body of unrivaled works. In his official capacity at the Imperial Council of State, he wrote in divânî, celi divânî, or rk’a many mensûrîlar, beratîlar, muâhedenâmeler (treaties), and tasdiânâmeler

57. Kit’a
Istanbul, late 19th–first half of 20th century
Sülüs and nesih
Ink, colors, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard
17.5 x 27.3 cm (6⅜ x 10⅜ in.)
(150)

Kâmil Efendi always wrote beautiful sülüs and nesih, as he did in this work. Nevertheless, as he lay dying, he said, “I do not grieve at my death. I am only sorry that I could not really learn calligraphy.”

The text of this kit’a is a hadîs:
“The learned ones of my community resemble the prophets of the children of Israel.” The ebrû used to decorate the kit’a is by Necmeddin Okay (see cat. nos. 59–60).
(certificates), as well as many meşk collections for teaching calligraphy. But it was his works in sülüs and nesih, in murakkaalar, levhalar, 
"ku'alar, hilyeler, and cüzler from the Qur’an, that won the greatest 
admiration and were most sought after. He made only one mushaf.

Although Kâmil Efendi gained great depth from his study of sülüs 
and nesih with Sâmi Efendi, in celi sülüs he was never able to rise to 
the level of Nazif Bey (see cat. nos. 54–55). Shortcomings that are 
insignificant in the small scripts are jarring in celi. Sâmi Efendi, the 
great master of the celi style, had this to say about the celi scripts, which 
did not reach artistic maturity until the early nineteenth century: “Not 
to write celi is to be unaware of the secrets of calligraphy.”
İSMAİL HAKKI ALTUNBEZER
1289/1873–1365/1946

İsmail Hakki was born on Zilhicce 10, 1289/February 9, 1873, in the Kuruçeşme quarter of Istanbul. His birth coincided with the Kurban Bayram prayers for the Festival of the Sacrifice at the end of that year’s pilgrimage to Mecca. On his father’s side, his ancestors had been calligraphers for five generations, and the young İsmail Hakki studied sütüs and nesih with his father, Mehmed İlim Efendi (1255/1839–1342/1924), who himself had studied with Kâdiasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi (see cat. nos. 36–37). He graduated from the painting division of the Ottoman School of Fine Arts in 1315/1897, but continued to study in the engraving division.

İsmail Hakki worked in the chancery of the Imperial Council of State (Dîvân-ı Hümâyûn), where he learned dîvânî, celi dîvânî, celi sütüs, and the tuğra from Sâmi Efendi (see cat. nos. 49–52). He was soon appointed to the post of second, then first, tuğrakeş, or writer of tuğralar. He taught râk’a at various schools and taught the tuğra and celi sütüs at the Calligraphers College (Medresetülhâtâtîn). Among the outstanding calligraphers he taught were Mâcid Ayral (1508/1891–1580/1961) and Mustafa Halim Özyazıcı (1515/1898–1584/1964).

When the Arabic alphabet was replaced by the Latin alphabet in 1547/1928, Ismail Hakki began to teach the art of illumination at the Eastern Decorative Arts School. After 1555/1936, he taught illumination at the Academy of Fine Arts (now Mimar Sinan University), but he did not teach the new classicism of Muhsin Demironat (see cat. no. 55) and Rikkat Kunt (see cat. no. 32). He assumed the surname Altunbezer—altunbezer means “gilder” or “illuminator”—because of this work.

İsmail Hakki fell ill in 1364/1945 and had to give up his job. He died on Şâ'bân 20, 1365/July 19, 1946, and was buried next to his father’s grave in the Karacaahmed Cemetery, in Istanbul. In accordance with a provision in İsmail Hakki’s will, Necmeddin Okay (see cat. nos. 59–60) copied the inscription for İsmail Hakki’s gravestone.

İsmail Hakki’s many compositions attest to a highly productive artistic career. His works in celi sütüs, which he executed with ease and swiftness, are particularly notable, as are his tuğralar and his writing in dîvânî and celi dîvânî on fermanlar, beratlar, and mensûrlar. He is also remembered for his works in mosques and domes in Istanbul (in the Selimiye, Lâleli, Edirnekapı, Zeynep Sultan, and Şemsi Paşa mosques, among others) and in Anatolia (in Afyon and Eskişehir). He also left lovely oil paintings, done with academic precision.

Hakki Bey is also famous as a grower of roses.

58. Levhâ
Istanbul, first half of 20th century

Celi sütüs
Gold and color on painted cardboard
70.5 × 70.8 cm (27 3/8 × 27 3/8 in.)

(240)

The type of istif called a müsennâ is created by writing a celi sütüs composition (the müsennâ form was used only rarely for works in celi ta’llık) both normally and in reverse, so that the two halves appear to meet face to face, with some letters intersecting along the central vertical axis. Each half is the mirror image of the other. It is possible to compose any text in this manner, but short quotations work best. The text here—“And He [God] is the knower of every thing”—appears in three places in the Qur’an (2:29, 6:101, 57:5). If a text containing the word Allah is chosen for a müsennâ, the word is preferably written only once, as a symbolic reference to the singularity of God. If the composition does not allow that, however, Allah can be written on both sides of the müsennâ and in both directions, as is the case in the besmele that appears at the center top of this piece. The signature composition, at the center bottom on this levha, is also written as a müsennâ.

In this levha, İsmail Hakki Altunbezer showed his skill by making three separate müsennâ compositions: the besmele, the Qur’anic verse, and the signature. Like other calligraphers who were trained in figurative art, İsmail Hakki sometimes allowed training to influence his calligraphy, and a hint of that influence is evident here. This work was prepared by the artist himself with the zer-sendück

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process, using his own stencil. He decorated the margin area with a design of his own devising, alternating between gold and a yellow gouache. Tuğrakes Hakkı Bey invented this style, and it disappeared with his death.
NECMEDDİN OKYAY
1300/1883–1596/1976

Born in Üsküdar, in Istanbul, on Rebi‘ülvelvel 19, 1300/January 29, 1883, Mehmed Necmeddin Okyay was the son of Mehmed Abdünnebi Efendi, head clerk in the religious court and one of the imams of the Yeni Vâlide Mosque, in Üsküdar. He began committing the Qur’an to memory while still a schoolboy and had learned it by heart by the time he finished his education at the Garden of Progress High School (Ravza-i Terakki Rüşdiyesi), where he studied the variant recitations of the Qur’an. The calligraphy teacher at the school, Hasan Ta’at Bey, taught him rık’a, divâni, and celi divâni and granted him the icâzet. Aware of the young man’s talent, the teacher took him to Filibe Hilmi Efendi (see cat. no. 45), but the Üsküdar Preparatory School where Necmeddin was then enrolled allowed him to attend the Hacı’s calligraphy classes no more than once a week, and the young Necmeddin left the school after a year.

Meanwhile, having developed an interest in ebrû paper, he began visiting Ibrahim Edhem Efendi (1245/1829–1321/1904), the şeyh of the Özbekler order of dervishes, to learn this craft. He also learned to make the glossy calligraphy paper known as âhâr paper. At the same time, Necmeddin was learning ta‘lîk and celi ta‘lîk from Sâmi Efendi (see cat. nos. 49–52), from whom he obtained the icâzet in ta‘lîk in 1323/1905. He earned the icâzet in nesih and sülüs from Hacı Arif Efendi in 1324/1906. Moreover, Vehbi Efendi taught him how to make ink in the traditional manner, and Seyfeddin Bey, who was chief archer at the Ottoman court in the time of Sultan Abdü laziz (r. 1861–76), taught him the sport of classic Ottoman archery. All the while, Necmeddin continued to attend lessons given in the mosque until he obtained a certificate known as an ilmiye icâzetnamesi, granting him the rank of âlim, or Islamic scholar. After his father died in 1325/1907, Necmeddin was appointed imam and later hatib (preacher) in the same mosque, a position he held for forty years.

When the Calligraphers College (Medresetülhattâtân) opened in Istanbul in 1332/1914, he enrolled in order to learn celi sülüs and the tuğrâ from Tuğrakes Hakkı Bey (see cat. no. 58); in two years’ time, he received an appointment at the school to teach the making of ebrû and âhâr paper. It was Necmeddin who invented the process for making marbled floral pictures (çiçekli ebrû) and the resist process for producing marbled calligraphy (yazılı ebrû), an extremely difficult art.

With the encouragement of Tuğrakes Hakkı Bey, he began to cultivate roses in the one-acre garden of his house, in the Tuygârtesesi neighborhood of Üsküdar. Necmeddin raised four hundred different species of roses. One of his students, Dr. Sühayl Ünver (1898–1986), jokingly used to call him the “Rose Reprobate.”

A man of many talents, Necmeddin became interested in bookbinding when, in 1344/1925, he came across some old stamps used to tool designs in leather. With the help of the bookbinder Bahaddin

59. Lefha
Istanbul, 1551/1932
Celî ta‘lîk
Ink on paper mounted on cardboard
85 x 119 cm (33 ½ x 46 ½ in.)
(102)

Necmeddin Okyay was the last great practitioner of the style of Ottoman celî ta‘lîk brought to perfection by Sâmi Efendi.

Celî ta‘lîk is usually written in a straight line, but here the calligrapher has used the script to compose an istif—a difficult feat. The text is şefaat ya Nebiâyllah (your intercession, O Prophet of God). Both the te (T) of şefaat and the ye (Y) of Nabi (y) are written in their kesûledi (extended) forms, parallel to each other. Above them is written the name of God, Allah.

An interesting anecdote about this lefha was told by both Necmeddin Efendi and Fuad Şemsî İnan (1886–1974), who commissioned the work. In 1934, Fuad Şemsî Bey acquired an empty picture frame that had been made by Leduc, the chief framer in the service of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909). The frame—gessoed and gilded, and 119 centimeters wide—was damaged but still magnificent.

One day, Fuad Şemsî Bey met Necmeddin Efendi and, hoping to pique his interest, asked, “Does any calligrapher nowadays come to mind who could be trusted to write a work worthy of this frame?” In fact, it is extremely difficult to compose a work of calligraphy to fit given dimensions. Only a very experienced artist can do it well, as Fuad Şemsî Bey was certainly aware.
Necmeddin Efendi responded that if he was told the dimensions of the frame, he himself would see whether anything could be done. He wrote the levha and decorated it with his own battal ebrâsu (a simple marbled paper) and gave it to Fuad Şemsi Bey as a gift. (The frame, however, will not accompany this levha in the exhibition.)
Efendi (see cat. no. 47), he was able to make splendid book covers using the classic design known as şemise. He also spent years restoring precious bindings in the Topkapı Sarayi Museum Library. His teaching activities, begun at the Topkapı Sarayi College, continued in 1555/1556 at the Academy of Fine Arts (now Mimar Sinan University), where he taught until retiring in 1567/1948. He gave lessons in his own home until his eyesight began to fail.

Throughout his career as a calligrapher, Necmeddin gave particular attention to the ta’lîk and celi ta’lîk scripts, at the encouragement of Sâmi Efendi. More than 140 of Necmeddin’s levhalar and ki’âlalar are preserved at Mimar Sinan University. His works are also in museums and private collections. In addition, thanks to the efforts of his students in ebrû and classic bookbinding, these two arts have been saved from oblivion.

Because Necmeddin was skilled at so many arts, he was also known as hezarfen, or he who practices a thousand arts. When a law mandating the use of surnames was passed in Turkey, in 1934, Necmeddin chose as his family name Okyay, from ok (arrow) and yay (bow), because of his interest in archery. He died on Muharrem 23, 1396/January 5, 1976, and was buried in the Karacaahmed Cemetery, in Üsküdar.

This great artist wasted hardly a moment of his ninety-three years of life. One of his greatest skills was his ability to attribute authorship of unsigned Ottoman calligraphic works and to determine the dates when they were produced. From his youth on, he painstakingly collected calligraphic works; a large part of his collection was presented to the Topkapı Sarayi Museum Library in 1961; the rest was moved to the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art and to the Türkpetrol Foundation, in Istanbul, following his death.

The author of this book is pleased to acknowledge that he is indebted to Necmeddin Okyay for much of the firsthand information presented in these pages, which he obtained from the master in personal communications during more than twenty years of study and friendship.

60. Murakkaa
Istanbul, 19th century; binding
20th century
Ink and colors on paper
Binding 27.6 x 21.1 cm (10 3/8 x 8 3/8 in.)
(581)

In 1917–18, Necmeddin Okyay originated two ebrû techniques. Ebrû, the Ottoman method of marbling paper, differs from its offspring, European marbling, in both materials and technique. In Turkish marbling, the finely ground colors, mixed with ox gall, are floated on a bath of gum tragacanth. The pattern formed on the surface of the bath is lifted off on a sheet of paper, which retains the pattern in reverse. The Europeans first encountered marbling during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, on the ebrû papers used to wrap Turkish tulip bulbs for export to Europe. Adapting the technique, European marblers usually use a bath of carrageenan (Irish moss) and treat their paper with alum. This process produces sharp-edged patterns, in contrast to the Turkish method, which results in a softer look.

Necmeddin Okyay’s new techniques were çiçekli ebrû, or flower-picture marbling, and yazılı ebrû, a resist process that reproduces calligraphy in marbling. Necmeddin Efendi recounted his invention of çiçekli ebrû this way: “One day, a man I did not know came to the Calligraphers College and asked me to do a picture of a flower in ebrû. I said to him, ‘Sir, in this art it is impossible to draw pictures. Masters of ebrû have tried to draw flowers, but the results did not resemble flowers.’ The stranger replied, ‘Why not try to do it?’ So I went home, set up an ebrû trough, and began to experiment. While I was trying to produce a tulip design, along came my dear friend [the calligrapher] Mâcid Ayral, who asked, ‘Why don’t you pull the tips of the petals upward?’ Now, over the course of my life, I have
learned a great deal about some things from people who knew nothing about those things, and that was the case here. I dipped a single hair from a horse's tail into the floating pigment and pulled one, and then the other, tip toward the far end of the trough. Sure enough, it looked just like a tulip.

"Because that day was a Friday, I left to do my duty as imam at the Yeni Vâlide Mosque, in Üsküdar. On my way home after the prayer service, I bought some tulips, hyacinths, and carnations. Studying each of them, I began to draw these flowers on the surface of the ebrû bath, using a single horse hair. Thanks to Mâcid, and the grace and beneficence of God, I was able to achieve the new design."

Two tulip-pattern ebrû works by Necmeddin Okyay, bordered with his battal ebrûsu (a simple marbled paper), were used in binding this sülüs-and-nesih murakkas by another calligrapher (the writing dates from the nineteenth century). When Necmeddin produced these ebrû pieces is not known, but they have the beauty of a painting.
BERAT

61. Berat of Bâyezid II
Istanbul, 914/1508
Tuğra and celi divânî
Ink on paper
77.9 × 25.2 cm (30¾ × 9 in.)
(55)

This berat (document granting an imperial title, privilege, or property) dates from the reign of the eighth Ottoman emperor, Sultan Bâyezid II (1481–1512). It was issued from Istanbul on the last day of Rebi‘ulhur 914/late August 1508. The tuğra, written in lampblack ink, reads: Bâyezid bin Mehmed Hân /Fel:lmuzaffer dâimâ (Bâyezid, son of Mehmed Hân, the ever-victorious).
The berat opening (or nişan-i şerif), as well as the text following, is written in the celi divânî script using lampblack ink. An interesting feature here is the early form of the celi divânî script, with the letter shapes undeveloped. At this point, the script did not use vowel signs and other markers to fill the spaces in the channel-shaped lines—as it did in examples written since the age of Süleyman I, the Magnificent (or the Lawgiver; r. 1520–66), when the script acquired a new personality.

This type of berat is called a sunnâmîe berat (statement-of-boundaries berat). Addressed to Mustafa Bey, the governor of the sancaq (division of a province) of Ohri (present-day Ohrid, Macedonia), it defines the boundaries of a zone in the district of Timûrhisar (now Demirhisar) and says no one may interfere in the affairs of this area.
HÜKÜM

62. Hüküm of Selim I
Istanbul, 919/1513
Tuğra, muhakkak, and rikâ'
Ink and gold on paper
194 × 24 cm (75⅔ × 9⅚ in.)
(569)

This hüküm (decree) dates from the reign of the ninth Ottoman emperor, Sultan Selim I, the Grim (1512–20). It was issued from Istanbul during the last ten days of Muharrem 919/early April 1513. The besmele is written at the top of the document in muhakkak script, using gold ink. Under it, also in gold ink, is the tuğra. Selimşah bin Bâyezid Hân el-muzaffer dâimâ (Shah Selim, son of Bâyezid Hân, the ever-victorious). The long text is written in the rikâ‘ script. It begins by confirming the grant of villages and agricultural property in the area of Üsküb (now Skopje, Macedonia) to Mustafa Paşa, then establishes the boundaries for these properties, place by place, and ends by saying that the grant is to go into effect within three days after the arrival of the document. At the bottom are written the signatures of thirty-four persons who witnessed the document. This is a rare example of a sinurnâme hücceti (statement of boundaries and title). Such documents were not made much later than this period.
BERAT

65. Berat of Selim II
Edirne, 975/1567
Tuğra and celi divanı
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
111 x 50.5 cm (43 1/2 x 11 3/4 in.)
(54)

This berat dates from the reign of the eleventh Ottoman emperor, Sultan Selim II (1566–74). It was issued from Edirne in the month of Cemâdelülâ 975/November 1567. At the top is the sultan’s tuğra, written in lapis lazuli blue and outlined with gold. It reads: Selim Şah bin Süleyman Şah Hân el-muzafer dâîma (Selim Shah, son of Süleyman Shah Hân, the ever-victorious). The open areas within the tuğra are decorated with various eye-catching motifs.

The first line of writing is a formula that begins nisân-i şerif (this noble sign). This formula, which is not used on fermanlar, is written in celi divanı in gold ink; the rest of the text is in the same script, but written in lampblack ink. The text is in the style preferred during the reign of the previous Ottoman emperor, Sultan Süleyman I, the Magnificent (or the Lawgiver; 1520–66). Zer-nisanlar (gold spots) are placed in a calculated pattern over the lines of writing, emphasizing both the shape of the line and the wealth of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century.

This type of berat is known as a mülknâme (property grant). The text says that the kâdi (judge) of Istanbul, Muhiddin Efendi, has prepared the legal measures in accord with Islamic law for Sultan Selim II to grant certain properties in the district of Timûr hisar (now Demirhisar), in the Paşa sancak, to the Grand Vezir Sokullu Mehmed Paşa (1505–1579).
64. Berat of Murad III
Istanbul, 983/1575
Tuğra and celi divânî
Ink and gold on paper
139.5 × 34.7 cm (54 3/8 × 13 3/8 in.)
(28)

This berat dates from the reign of the twelfth Ottoman emperor, Sultan Murad III (1574–95). It was issued from Istanbul during the last ten days of the month of Safer 983/early June 1575. A short invocation is written at the top of the document in a small script. Underneath is the sultan’s tuğra, written in lampblack ink and outlined in gold ink. Some areas between the letters of the kürsü are completely filled in with gold ink. The tuğra reads: Şah Murad bin Selim Şah Hân el-muzaffer dâimâ (Shah Murad, son of Shah Selim Hân, the ever-victorious). The entire text is written in celi divânî script, using lampblack ink. The zer-niştir (gold spots) above the lines of text are closely spaced.

This document defines the boundaries of real property in the Bergos district granted by Sultan Murad III to Grand Vezir Sokullu Mehmed Paşa (1505–1579).

Opposite: Detail, cat. no. 64
65. Berat of Murad III
Istanbul, 985/1575
Tugra and celâ divânı
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
128 × 32.5 cm (49 ⅝ × 12¾ in.)
(39)

This berat dates from the reign of the twelfth Ottoman emperor, Sultan Murad III (1574–95). It was issued from Istanbul during the last ten days of the month of Recep 985/late October 1575. The tugra was drawn in lapis lazuli blue and outlined in gold ink; it is similar to the tugra in catalogue number 63 but of a superior quality. The illuminated details within the tugra, as well as the curtain of graceful illumination that hangs above it, reflect the brilliant elegance of the sixteenth century. The tugra reads: Şah Murad bin Selim Şah Hân el-muzaffer dâimâ (Shah Murad, son of Shah Selim Hân, the ever-victorious).

This berat renews a previous berat from Sultan Selim II, which gave the tax revenue of the Cirmen sancak to Grand Vezir Sokollu Mehmed Paşa (1505–1579). Therefore, it is called a mülknâme tecdîd berat—a berat that renews a mülknâme. (Grants made during a sultan’s lifetime were abrogated after his death, and it was necessary for the succeeding sultan to renew them on documents written under his own tugra.)

The text of this berat is written in celâ divânı script. The first line—the nişan-i şerîf—is in gold ink, and the main text is in lampblack ink. As an attractive contrast, references within the text to God and to Mehmed Paşa are written in gold ink.
BERAT

66. Berat of Mehmed III
Istanbul, 1004/1596
Tuğra and cellî divânî
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
250 × 41 cm (97 1/2 × 15 1/2 in.)
(26)

This berat dates from the reign of the thirteenth Ottoman emperor, Sultan Mehmed III (1595–1603). It was issued from Istanbul during the first ten days of Ramazan 1004/early May 1596. The tuğra is crudely drawn in lapis lazuli blue and outlined in gold, with some interior illumination. It reads: 
Mehemmed bin Murad Hân el-
muzaffer dâimâ (Mehemmed, son of Murad Hân, the ever-victorious). The text is written in a beautiful, flowing cellî divânî that compensates for the flawed tuğra. The first line (beginning with the nişan-ı şerîf) is in gold ink, and the rest in lampblack ink.

The document concerns a mosque, school, and caravansaray, in the Canat district of Erdel province, that were constructed by order of Grand Vezir Sokullu Mehmed Paşa (1505–1579). The document is a temliknâmê tecdid berât, renewing the contract with the previous sultan. Notable here is the long-drawn-out name of Mehmed Paşa, piled with honorifics and patronymics, which seems to be competing for length with the work itself.
FERMAN

67. Ferman of Mehmed IV
Istanbul, 1070/1669
Tuğra and kūrma divānī
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
56.7 × 27.9 cm (22 3/8 × 10 3/8 in.)
(52)

This ferman dates from the reign of the nineteenth Ottoman emperor, Sultan Mehmed IV (1648–87). It was decreed from Istanbul on Rebi‘ulvelvel 20, 1070/December 5, 1669. The tuğra of the sultan is drawn in gold ink, and the spaces between the letters of the kūrma are painted with lapis lazuli blue. It reads: Şah Mehmed bin İbrahim Hân et-mużaffer dâimâ (Shah Mehmed, son of İbrahim Hân, the ever-victorious). The style of decoration that envelops the tuğra is less complex than that of the sixteenth century. It consists of scrolls and rûmi motifs—that is, stylized vegetable pods (sometimes baselessly called arabesques).

The hatt-i hümâyûn (order of the sultan) is written in his own hand in an ʿunvan (as in the ʿunvan sahi‘esi) that is topped by a dome shape and crescent finial. It reads: Ferman-i ʾâliyânım mûcebince amel oluna—hülfündan hazer eluna (Let my illustrious decree be put into effect; beware of opposing it). The text of the ferman is written in a sort of shorthand version of divānī known as kūrma divānī.

The document decrees that no one except the sheikh of the Aziz Mahmud Hûlûyî Sufi Lodge in Üskûdar and its chapel may interfere with the income of the lodge and chapel.
BERAT

68. Berat of Süleyman II
Istanbul, 1099/1688
Tuğra and celî dîvâni
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
189 x 43 cm (73 3/4 x 16 1/2 in.)
(27)

This berat dates from the reign of the twentieth Ottoman emperor, Sultan Süleyman II (1687–91). It was issued from Istanbul during the last ten days of Rebiülevvel 1099/late January and early February 1688. The tuğra is written in gold ink, with some color between the letters of the kârsu, and is finished with simple ornamentation. It reads: Şah Süleyman bin İbrahim Hân el-muzaffer dâimâ (Shah Süleyman, son of Ibrahim Hân, the ever-victorious). Written above the tuğra is a brief invocation. The first sentence (with the nişan-ı şerîf) is written in gold ink, the rest in lampblack ink, and all in the celî dîvâni script.

This berat renews the tax-collecting rights—established in the time of Sultan Selim II (r. 1566–74) by his daughter İsmihan Sultan (d. 1585)—in some townships in the sancaq of Avlonya.
BERAT

69. Berat of Ahmed II
Edirne, 1105/1694
Tuğra and celi divânı
Ink, color, and gold on paper
119.3 x 43.8 cm (46⅜ x 17⅛ in.)
(58)

This berat dates from the reign of the twenty-first Ottoman emperor, Sultan Ahmed II (1691–95). It was issued from Edirne during the last ten days of Receb 1105/late March 1694. The tuğra is written in red ink. It reads: Şah Ahmed bin İbrahim Hân el-muzaffer dâimâ (Shah Ahmed, son of İbrahim Hân, the ever-victorious). The first sentence (nişan-i şerîf) is written in celi divânı in gold ink; the rest of the text is in the same script in lampblack ink.

This document is a renewal of an earlier berat concerning some properties in the estate of İsmihan Sultan (d. 1585) acquired during the reign of her brother, Sultan Murad III (1574–95).
Nâsih Efendî
1229/1814–1503/1885

Hoca Bekir Nâsih Efendi was born in Istanbul in 1229/1814. In 1245/1830, after receiving his primary education, he entered service in the chancery of the Imperial Council of State (Divân-ı Hümâyûn), where he received the name Nâsih, or Copyist. He learned divânî, cellî divânî, and bâbûlî rûkîsî from Mûmtaz Efendi (1225/1810–1287/1871). (It is not known with whom he studied sülüs and nesih writing.) In 1250/1834, he became a teacher of the hutût-ı mütenevvia (all the scripts in use) in the chancery, and in 1258/1842, he was transferred to the Bureau of Urgent Affairs, where he was commissioned to copy the sultan’s annual address to the pilgrims in Mecca. He continued to rise in rank until his death on Rebiûlevvel 13, 1503/December 20, 1885. He was interred in the hazire (enclosed cemetery) of the Ramazan Efendi Mosque, in the Koca Mustafa Paşa quarter of Istanbul.

Nâsih Efendi wrote the inscriptions on the tomb of Grand Vezir Koca Reşid Paşa, adjacent to the Bâyezid Mosque, Istanbul. His son, Hacı Rif’at Efendi (b. 1259/1876), was also a calligrapher at the Imperial Council of State.

70. Menşûr of Abdülhamid II
Istanbul, 1500/1883
Tuğra and cellî divânî
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
156 x 79 cm (60½ x 30¾ in.)
(14)

This menşûr dates from the reign of the thirty-fourth Ottoman emperor, Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909). It was issued from Istanbul on Rebiûlâhir 1, 1500/February 7, 1883. The author is certain that Sâmi Efendi (see cat. nos. 49–52) drew the tuğra, executed in the zer-endûd process and without outlining. It reads: Abdülhamid Hân bin Abdülmecid el-muzaifer dâimâ (Abdülhamid Hân, son of Abdülmecid, the ever-victorious). It was further illuminated in 1970 by Rikkat Kunt (see cat. no. 32), who enclosed the tuğra within an elegant teardrop shape that extends to the invitation at the top of the document.

The text concerns the appointment of Abd-i Ihâ Paşa, who held the rank of governor of Rumelia, as a member of the Imperial Council of State. It is written in cellî divânî, with lines in black alternating with lines in gold. This script reached its most mature form in the nineteenth century. It is written in a channel-shaped line with complex interlacing and composition of the letters and words. From the style of the writing on this piece, it is clear that the cellî divânî is by Hoca Bekir Nâsih Efendi.

Detail, cat. no. 70
71. Menşûr of Abdülhamid II
Istanbul, 1316/1898
Tugra, tevkî, and muhakkak
Ink and gold on paper
141 × 86.5 cm (54 3/8 × 33 3/4 in.)
(597)

This menşûr dates from the reign of the thirty-fourth Ottoman emperor, Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909). It was issued from Istanbul on Şa’ban 15, 1316/December 29, 1898, and was sent to the emir of Mecca, Veizir Şerif Avnûrrefik Paşa. It concerns various real properties and their incomes, which were transferred to a foundation to support the poor and others living near the holy shrines in Mecca and Medina. Because this document was being sent to the Hijaz, it was written in Arabic rather than Ottoman Turkish.

It is most likely that Sâmi Efendi (see cat. nos. 49–52) wrote the tugra, which is executed in gold ink with no outlining. It reads: Abdülhamid Han bin Abdülmecid el-muzafer dâimâ (Abdülhamid Hân, son of Abdülmecid, the ever-victorious). The text above and below the tugra is written in a beautiful nineteenth-century version of the long-since-abandoned tevkî script. The author believes this text was written by Hacı Kâmil Efendi (see cat. no. 57). At the very top of the menşûr is a besmele written in muhakkak script, using gold ink.
"..."
The Genealogy of Ottoman Calligraphers

A major factor in the development of the art of calligraphy among the Ottoman Turks was the strong and continuous master-and-student system. To clarify this tradition, two genealogical trees have been prepared. The first is of calligraphers in the aklâm-i sitte (six scripts), from Şeyh Hamdullah (853/1449–926/1520; see cat. nos. 1–2) to our era. The tree is limited, however, almost exclusively to calligraphers represented in the catalogue. (Indeed, if all the calligraphers who lived and worked within the time frame covered were included, the genealogical tree would become as huge as one of California’s world-famous giant sequoias!) With Necmeddin Okyay (1300/1885–1396/1976; see cat. nos. 59–60), the great artists Mustafa Halim Özyazıcı (1315/1898–1384/1964) and Hâmîd Aytaç (1309/1891–1402/1982) form the final links in a genealogy unbroken for five hundred years. (Examples of work by Halim Bey and Hâmîd Bey can be seen, respectively, in figure 1, on page 2, and figure 19, on page 55, in the introduction to this volume.) Three calligraphers whose education took place outside the system sketched here are not included: Ahmed Karahisârî (875/1470–963/1556; see cat. no. 6), Mustafa bin İbrahim (active 16th century; see cat. no. 7), and Mahmûd Celâleddîn (1165/1750–1245/1829; see cat. nos. 52–53).

A second genealogical tree has been prepared for Ottoman ta‘lîk calligraphers, some of whom are represented in the catalogue, beginning with the founder of the style, Yesârî Mehmed Es‘ad Efendi (d. 1213/1798; see cat. no. 28).

Where applicable, calligraphers' names are accompanied by catalogue numbers in brackets. The names of calligraphers who are not represented in the catalogue yet who need to be mentioned are followed by the calligrapher's date of death, when it is known.
TA’LÍK SCRIPT

YESÂRÎ MEHMET
ES'AD [cat. no. 28]

ARABZÂDE MEHMET
SA'DULLAH [cat. no. 29]

YESÂRÎZÂDE MUSTAFA
İZZET [d. 1265/1849]

MUSTAFA İZZET
[cat. nos. 56–57]

KIBRISÎZÂDE İSMAIL
HAKKI [d. 1279/1862]

ALÎ HAYDAR
[d. 1287/1870]

SAMİ
[cat. nos. 49–52]

ÇARŞANBALI
ÂRIF [cat. no. 46]

HASAN RIZA
[cat. no. 56]

NECMDİDİN OKYAY
[cat. nos. 59–60]

MEHMED NAZİF
[cat. nos. 54–55]

MEHMED HULÜSİ YAZGAN
[cat. no. 53]
Glossary

āhār: size applied to calligraphic paper

akbdse: calligraphic paper whose writing area and margins are dyed different colors

aklám-ı sítte: the sülüs, nesih, muhakkak, reyhânî, texkî, and rikd Scripts, together known as the six scripts

asere güllü: rosette that appears after every ten verses of the Qur’an

bâhvali rık’a: method used in Ottoman government offices for writing the rık’a script

berat (pl. beratlar): document granting an imperial title, privilege, or property

besmele: “In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful”; the first sentence in the Qur’an, and the invocation that occurs at the beginning of all but one of its chapters

çakmak mühre: paper burnisher

cedvel (pl. cedweller): ruled gold frame surrounding the text of a calligraphic work; also a gilded line separating poetic verses or elements in a kitâb

celı: scripts (with the exception of celı dîvanı) written larger than their normal size, with a broad nibbed pen, or enlarged by means of squaring

celı dîvanı: version of the dîvanı script written with vowels, reading signs, and decorative features, and used only for the most significant documents and proclamations of the Ottoman state

çihāryâr: the first four caliphs (successors of the Prophet) Abû Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmân, and ʿAlî, also called the Four Friends, whose names often appear on hilyeler

cüz (pl. cüzler): one of thirty sections of the Qur’an, generally twenty pages long

Delâlî-ı Hayrat: handbook of prayers for the Prophet

dîvânı: script that evolved from old Persian ta’lîk; in Ottoman Turkey, its use was restricted to the Imperial Council of State

dîvît: portable inkwell and penholder

durak (pl. duraklar): rosette-style decoration occurring between each verse of the Qur’an, as well as between the sentences of the hîlye text; also used to punctuate hadîslar

ebrâ: Turkish marbled paper

elîf (pl. elîfler): first letter of the Arabic alphabet, tall and vertical in shape (Arabic spelling: alîf)

En’âm: The Cattle; chapter 6 of the Qur’an, frequently written as a separate volume

En’âm-î Şerîf: collection of chapters from the Qur’an

etek: bottom portion of a hîlye containing the second part of the hîlye text, a prayer for the Prophet, and the calligrapher’s signature

Fâtîha: opening chapter of the Qur’an

ferman (pl. fermanlar): imperial edict

Four Friends: see çihâryâr

göbek: central cartouche in which the first part of the hîlye text is written

hâca: title conferred on one who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca

hadîs (pl. hadîslar): sayings and deeds of the Prophet recorded by his companions

hâfiz: one who has memorized the Qur’an

hâlkârî: type of illumination in which the motifs are painted in a wash of gold ink and outlined in full-strength gold ink

hareke: vowel signs used in writing the Arabic script

hâtime: colophon

hilâl: crescent that often surrounds the göbek on a hîlye

hîlye (pl. hîlyeler): levha composed of a text describing the Prophet Muhammad

hîlye-i saâdet: “the felicitous hîlye”; term describing the complete hîlye text

huzib güllü: rosette that occurs after every five pages of the Qur’an

hokka: inkwell

hurde (or haft) ta’lîk: small version of the Ottoman ta’lîk script, used for literary works and collections of poetry, and for fetwâlar (opinions on Islamic canon law) and vakîfveler (endowment deeds)

icâzet: calligraphy teacher’s authorization for the student to sign his own name to his work; also the script (see rikd’) in which the teacher notes his approval on the permission document

icâzet ceremony (icâzet cemiyeti): assembly, usually in a mosque, at which a student who has earned the icâzet is presented to a jury of master calligraphers

icâzet kitâb kitâb: written by a calligraphy student to obtain his icâzet

icâzetnâme (pl. icâzetnâmeler): document, most often in the form of an icâzet kitâb, certifying the holder to practice as a professional

icç pervaz: inner border of a kitâb or levha
**istif** (pl. istifler): calligraphic composition

**kâdsi** (pl. kâdîler): judge of Islamic law

**kâdisi** (pl. kâdisi): supreme judge

**kalıp** (pl. kalıplar): stencil used in the production of large-scale calligraphic works and inscriptions

**karalama** (pl. karalamar): calligrapher’s practice piece

**kuruca divânı**: shorthand version of divânı script

**küt’a** (pl. küt’alar): small calligraphic work, usually rectangular, and generally using two scripts (one large and one small) or ta’lik script alone

**kol** (pl. kollar): tail-like projection growing out of, and to the right of, the ovals of the tuğra; also called the hâncer

**koltuk** (pl. koltuklar): rectangular or triangular space in küt’alar, hilyeler, and levhalar that allows for the arrangement of longer lines of a larger script with shorter lines of a smaller script; often decorated

**körüklü murakkaa**: accordion album

**kubur**: cylindrical penholder

**kârsi**: monogram proper in the tuğra; also called the sere

**kurus**: piaster; unit of Ottoman currency

**levha** (pl. levhalar): large-scale calligraphic composition, most commonly in the cellî sülüs and cellî ta’lik scripts, that can be framed and hung in mosques, offices, and homes

**lika**: wad of raw silk used in an inkwell to absorb ink

**mâil küt’a**: küt’a in which the writing slants upward, from the lower right to the upper left

**makta** (pl. makta lar): pen-cutting slab

**menşîr** (pl. menşîrlar): imperial appointment

**mêşk** (pl. mêskler): lesson, practice work, or sample for study

**mêşk küt’ası** (pl. mêşk küt’alar): calligraphic-exercise küt’a

**mukleb**: envelope flap attached to the back of an Islamic binding that protects the edges of the book and can be tucked between the pages to serve as a bookmark

**müfredât exercises**: elementary calligraphy exercises consisting of single and paired letters

**müfredât küt’ası** (pl. müfredât küt’alar): küt’a consisting of müfredât exercises

**müfredât mêsîh**: lesson in writing single and paired letters

**muhakkak**: one of the group of six scripts, written with a pen whose nib is approximately 1 millimeter (½ inch) wide; a smaller-scale version of the tevki script; mainly used for official purposes and rarely for copying manuscripts; also called içâzet script

**mushaf** (pl. mushaflar): the Qur’an in a single volume or codex

**nesih**: one of the group of six scripts, written with a pen whose nib is approximately 1 millimeter (½ inch) wide; favored in Ottoman calligraphy for copying the Qur’an; also used in writing vakfîyeler (endowment deeds)

**nestâ’îk**: Persian name for the Ottoman ta’lik script

**reisü’l-hattâtîn**: chief of the calligraphers

**reisü’l-ülemâ**: chief of the Islamic religious establishment

**reyyânî**: one of the group of six scripts, written with a pen whose nib is approximately 2 millimeters (¾ inch) wide; used for copying large-format Qur’ans (until the sixteenth century) and for writing the besmele

**murakkaa** (pl. murakkâalar): calligraphic album

**mürrekkebât exercises**: advanced calligraphic exercises consisting of combinations of letters

**mürrekkebât küt’ası**: küt’a consisting of mürrekkebât exercises

**mürrekkebât mêsîh**: lesson in combining letters in words and sentences

**rücka**: script for daily use not considered worthy of artistic treatment

**rücka**: one of the group of six scripts, written with a pen whose nib is approximately 1 millimeter (½ inch) wide; a smaller-scale version of the tevki script

**Rumelia**: European territory of the Ottoman Empire

**sancak**: banner or standard; also a division of a province in the Ottoman Empire
sa`y: “persevere”; a device representing this exhortation appears between the lines of writing in calligraphic exercises

secavend: symbols, in red ink, added by the calligrapher to indicate stops, pauses, and other elements in the recitation of the Qur’an

secde güllü: rosette in the border of a page of the Qur’an marking where the reader is required to prostrate himself

şemse: sunburst design stamped into a leather binding

şemse kap: classic Ottoman bookbinding using the şemse design, alone or in combination with other motifs, on embossed leather decorated with gold

serlevha: symmetrical double-page illumination opening a Qur’an

şeyh sheikh

şeyhülislam: highest Islamic authority in the Ottoman state

seyyid: descendant of the Prophet

six scripts: see aklam-1 sitte

sülüs: one of the group of six scripts, written with a pen whose nib is approximately 2 millimeters (½ inch) wide; with nesih, particularly favored by Ottoman calligraphers

süre başı (pl. süre başları): chapter heading

taklid: imitation of the work of other calligraphers as a method of education, to receive the idzet, or as a token of homage

takoz (pl. takozlar): “chock”; extra strip of paper, illumination, or ebrâ added to a calligraphic work, “propping up” the work in the manner of a chock

tal’ık: delicate script (unrelated to the old Persian script of the same name) written with a pen whose nib is 2 millimeters (½ inch) wide; largely used for writing kut’alar

tashih kalemıraş: correction knife

tevki: one of the group of six scripts, written with a pen whose nib is approximately 2 millimeters (½ inch) wide; mainly used for official purposes and rarely for copying manuscripts

tomar (pl. tomarlar): scroll; also the very large script and pen for writing on a scroll

tağra (pl. tağralar): sultan’s calligraphic emblem

tağraş (pl. tağraşlar): writer of tağralar

unvan sahifesi: single illuminated opening page

vezir: one of the sultan’s ministers; the grand vezir was the sultan’s chief minister

zahriye (pl. zahriyeler): frontispiece

zahriye: method using a stencil to produce levhalar in gold ink or gold leaf
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پیام دیگر از فردی

اسلام یا عزیزم

صدای میزانی در یکی از این محیط‌ها می‌باشد که

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