Muqarnas
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In this volume marking the thirtieth anniversary of *Muqarnas*, I would like to take the opportunity to reflect on the evolution of our publications over the years. To that end, we sent the members of our Editorial and Advisory Boards a questionnaire, asking them to comment on the contributions of *Muqarnas* and its Supplements series to the field of Islamic art studies over the past three decades. We also asked them to provide suggestions for possible future directions, and to point out areas that may be improved in the coming years. I would like to thank the contributors, whose observations, thoughts, and hopes for *Muqarnas* have been anonymously incorporated into this foreword, which, in conversation with their comments, looks back on the history of the publication and offers some possibilities for the path it might take going forward.

When Oleg Grabar, the founding editor of *Muqarnas*, launched the journal thirty years ago, in 1983, he compared the state of the art then to thirty years earlier and proposed “some approaches to the further investigation of the history of the arts in Muslim countries.” He observed in the first volume’s opening essay, titled “Reflections on Islamic Art,” that the field in those early years was essentially a “Western” endeavor, originating from three paths:

Thirty years ago, the study of Islamic art was easy enough to define. Most people came to it along one of three simple paths. One was archaeology... Another was collecting... And finally there was the old and much-maligned Orientalism... Whatever the mix of these three preoccupations in any one scholar or essayist, the result was nearly always the same: the formation of a small group of practitioners with largely overlapping knowledge, asking many of the same questions, and using commonly accepted modes for exchanging information.1

By 1983, the growing complexity of the scholarship and the increasing cultural diversity of its practitioners held the potential to go beyond “traditional and restricted scholarship” (although that was necessary as well) and to offer “a unique opportunity to try something else, to use the more speculative and more theoretical approaches developed in other disciplines, or to develop an entirely new methodology that could eventually be translated into other fields.”2 Since the history of Islamic art was “still in its infancy,” Grabar pointed out that this heady projection had to be tempered by solid empirical scholarship in order to fill in the gaping lacunae in basic documentation:

Whole regions—Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Africa—have hardly been explored. Barely half a dozen illustrated manuscripts have been published, and what we know of the processes of creation and beautification in the Islamic world since its inception is minimal. Ideologically, old notions of iconoclasm and ornament predominate and still percolate into the manuals and surveys that form the taste of the educated public. An argument can therefore be made for a massive effort to catch up with other subfields of the history of art. Monuments should be studied and published, stylistic and iconographic analyses pursued, written sources culled for information, theories and hypotheses tested and discussed.3

In this connection, Grabar stressed the need for a widely available journal “that would provide bibliographical, and other practical information about research and thinking in the field; and that would serve as a forum for the exchange of information and ideas about Islamic art.”4 He also underlined the importance of considering the historiography of the field: “for beyond the traditional scholarship of information, one of the objectives
of this annual is precisely to investigate and to reflect upon the attitudes that shape our understanding of Islamic art.5

It is worth highlighting the needs of the field that the founding editor outlined, so that readers may assess to what extent thirty years of *Muqarnas* has succeeded in meeting these goals. His essay provided a critical review of prevalent approaches in the few manuals and survey books existing at that time, on the basis of which several desiderata were charted for the future. Given that the annual was a publication of the newly established Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a fundamental focus on architecture and the built environment was notable in Grabar’s essay. Observing that greater attention had been paid in past scholarship to architecture and decoration than to the other arts, he speculated on the possible reasons for this preference:

It is as though, at the level of what may be called universal prestige, architecture and its related techniques outrank painting, sculpture, and objects. The question is whether or not this corresponds to some profound truth about the Muslim world...Or have the historical circumstances of Islam in fact preserved something that is true of all cultures: that the built environment is consistently the most meaningful form of human creativity? Is the tendency to emphasize the artistic history of painting, sculpture, and objects an aberration of Western elites since the Renaissance and of Chinese literati?6

The Aga Khan Program’s mission to improve contemporary architectural practice through meaningful engagement with historical models and values brought along with it an emphasis on how *Muqarnas* might bridge past and present. In addressing this concern Grabar commented on the expectations of differing audiences, ranging from modern practitioners of architecture, with their increasing demands on and expectations of the academic scholarship, to the general public:

The past decades have sharpened and increased our understanding of much of Islamic art, but new concerns and questions, many of them raised outside the academic world, require that we pursue something beyond traditional and restricted scholarship. We must also deal with the protean complexities of the past as they merge into the present in ways that are attuned to contemporary quests.

What these might be is less clear, but I hope that *Muqarnas* can serve the two functions of scholarly accomplishment and imaginative, even speculative, discourse on the meaning of yesterday for today.7

Grabar aptly raised the issue of simplistic generalizations regarding Islamic art in discourses on its supposedly unchanging universal “character.” Noting the “contemporary demands for a definition of Islamic forms independent of time and space,” he also detected in general survey books the “lurking question” of “what is Islamic” about Islamic monuments. He furthermore commented on the issue of the relation of Islamic art to “regional, ethnic, and eventually national entities, and to characteristics that grew out of climactic conditions but which have become tied to ethnic and national identity.”8

As a way of transcending these prevailing approaches, Grabar underlined the need to comprehend more fully the conceptualization and contextual specificities of monuments within time and space: “The study of Islamic art requires, first of all, a better understanding of what Islamic culture thought of itself and how it operated in any particular time.”9 This would become one of the main objectives of *Muqarnas*, which sought, among other things, to shed light on the underestimated complexity of Islamic art, as an antidote to its presumed “otherness” and easily digestible simplicity. The founding editor drew attention to the importance of scrutinizing primary written sources, which “have not been sufficiently used in dealing with Islamic art,” and stated with conviction that the available information “does allow for greater depths of meaning than have been reached so far.”10 He also underscored another obligation of art historical research on the Islamic world, namely, cultivating the field’s interdisciplinarity by setting up problems and posing questions for “cultural and literary historians.”11

Grabar made several perceptive predictions about future trends in the field, which until then had been dominated by archaeologists and medievalists. He forecast the development of interest in later periods, with their linguistically more diverse and abundant primary sources:

The concentration of scholarly effort on the early centuries of Islam, with its concomitant emphasis on the Arab world,
reflects in part the earlier concern of scholarship with unraveling and explaining the beginnings of Islamic culture and in part the influence of archaeology, a technique far more at ease with early monuments than with recent ones. It is unlikely that books written ten years from now will exhibit the same bias, for the present concentration of research on later times will provide better representation for the fourteenth century onward. An awareness of regional differences is also bound to develop further, if for no other reason than that the share of sources for the later periods is more evenly distributed among Arabic, Turkish (in several forms), Persian, Urdu, and Malay than it was for the first six centuries when Arabic prevailed.

He frankly admitted that our knowledge of Islamic art had been skewed by the prevalent focus on the early centuries of Islam, to the exclusion of the last three centuries:

In the meantime, however, we have a vision of Islamic art in which the earliest monuments create the norms by which the whole artistic span is defined. This emphasis gives undue importance to the pre-Islamic origins of Islamic forms at the expense of their Islamic operation, and it implies that the contemporary world does not descend from an earlier time, but in some way still partakes of its culture.12

The founding editor’s critical commentary on the state of the field was meant to induce reflection, not to prescribe a set formula for future studies. In fact, he explicitly professed that no single approach could do justice to the sophisticated complexity of Islamic art:

These remarks are not meant to comprise either a systematic doctrine or a method of dealing with Islamic art, but rather to suggest that the artistic experience of the Muslim world in over 1,400 years is too rich, too varied, and too complex to lend itself to a single message, a single voice, or a single explanation. No one person can master its intricacies with the accuracy and commitment it deserves, and it would be a betrayal of its history to limit it to one formal system or to one set of explanations.13

The nine articles that accompanied this farsighted introductory essay in the inaugural volume of *Muqarnas* displayed the cutting-edge scholarship of the time, which then continued to lean heavily toward the conventional era deemed worth studying, the Middle Ages, with only two articles on the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and another on a typological study of Berber dwellings in the High Atlas Mountains. The volume was predominantly architectural in focus and featured just two articles on metalwork and painting. In subsequent years *Muqarnas* began to broaden its range of topics and methodological diversity, while consistently maintaining a high caliber of scholarship. This transformation reflected the exponential growth of the field from the late 1980s and 1990s onward, as well as the Aga Khan Program’s unquestionable role in expanding the frontiers of “Islamic art” chronologically, geographically, and intellectually.14

As Grabar predicted in 1983, there was a subsequent shift in focus from the early period in the central zone of the Islamic lands, to other regions and eras. This transformation came about in the wake of a rising global interest in early modern and modern studies in other fields, which brought the Islamic world in these centuries to the forefront. Moreover, just as the disciplinary gulf between the fields of archaeology and art history in general was growing wider, it was also becoming increasingly difficult to attain access to early Islamic archaeological sites, particularly in Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan. These developments shifted the primary focus of studies away from early monuments in the so-called central Islamic lands to countries where materials across media—art and architecture—were more accessible. The medium that seems to have benefited the most is the arts of the book, conducted in the safe comfort zone of easily reached manuscript libraries, even though publications in this field were not lacking before. The growth of research on Islamic manuscript painting can be correlated with the rise of “image studies” and the “visual turn” across the disciplines of art history, literary criticism, and cultural and visual studies. The current fascination with “materiality” and “the thing,” however, has started to swing the pendulum toward the physicality of architectural monuments, accompanied by a renewed attention to “object studies.” The latter trend partly intersects with the augmented prestige in the twenty-first century of museums, with their concern for promoting “close encounters” with rarified *objets d’art*.

Growing criticism of ahistorical approaches to Islamic art and architecture also contributed, beginning in the 1990s, to a change in emphasis from artistic/cul-
Faced in the beginning with the danger that financial support for the annual might no longer be forthcoming, I raised temporary funds for volumes 11 and 12, using this transitional period to secure permanent funding from the endowment of the Harvard Aga Khan Professorship. I also formulated new directions for the publication, and initiated a “peer review” system for submissions in order to ensure the highest possible standards. New Editorial and Advisory Boards were appointed to give the expanded scope of coverage and readership an interdisciplinary dimension, without changing the primary visual focus. To help solicit articles from a wider range of international contributors, the Aga Khan Postdoctoral Fellowships Program was expanded, with fellows being encouraged to submit articles to *Muqarnas* based on their new research.

In volume 13 (1996), the subtitle of the journal, *An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture*, was changed to *An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World*, a decision that responded to debates on the controversial implications and limiting scope of the original subtitle. Earlier volumes did occasionally accommodate articles on photography, archaeology, urbanism, and vernacular or modern architecture—categories not readily identifiable as “Islamic”—and relevant monuments or objects created in non-Muslim contexts. Yet the new subtitle and call for papers in my “Editor’s Note” that year announced a further expansion of horizons, which largely defines our current purview as a “scholarly journal comprising articles on art, architectural history, archaeology, and all aspects of Islamic visual cultures, historical and contemporary”:

The substitution of “Islamic Art and Architecture” with the more inclusive category of “visual culture” seemed particularly in keeping with the broader scope and interdisciplinary framework we would like to envision for *Muqarnas*. This framework will accommodate essays on the reception of Islamic art and architecture in various contexts, and encourage historical and theoretical studies on such topics as the Islamicate forms in non-Muslim settings from the Middle Ages to the present, Orientalism, and the post-colonial critique. Critical essays on the historical development of the field, with its distinctive traditions of archaeological research, epigraphy, collecting, exhibiting and scholarship are also welcome. Along these lines, we would like to elicit occasional articles assessing the state of the field by reviewing a group of books or cultural events.
Fig. 1. Celebrating thirty years of *Muqarnas* (1983–2013): the covers themselves reveal the evolution of the annual publication over three decades.
We do not, however, wish to initiate regular book reviews, a service already performed by a number of other journals.

We will, of course continue to publish articles on art and architecture that introduce new information, documentation and interpretations. From time to time, there may also be special issues dedicated to the proceedings of conferences and symposia as there have been in the past. In addition to the traditional subjects included in previous volumes, however, we would like to increase the coverage of hitherto underemphasized periods (e.g., early modern and modern) and of regions generally considered marginal to the "central" territories of the Islamic world. We would particularly like to welcome visually relevant articles within the broadly defined scope of cultural and literary studies, as well as interpretive essays capable of engaging major art historical issues. Other contributions we would like to encourage are translations or interpretations of written primary sources capable of deepening our understanding of visual artifacts, their terminology, and the contextual meanings they embody. In short we hope to increase variety in our repertoire without radically changing the primary focus on art and architecture.17

Some of these directions were already envisioned in the founding editor’s preface, where he admitted the difficulty of realizing projected goals: "Obviously, many years will elapse before we will know whether these attempts will succeed. In large measure, success will depend as much on the response to Muqarnas as on the intellectual quality and excitement of the materials presented."18 Today, thirty years later, even with the accumulation of an impressive set of thirty volumes, we are not too far removed from that initial observation.

In volume 26 (2009), I introduced another modification to the journal’s subtitle, An Annual on the Visual Cultures of the Islamic World, a tweak meant to articulate the multiplicity of artistic traditions that can hardly be subsumed under an overarching, monolithic visual culture. Other changes include the introduction of illustrations in color (to improve visual appeal and documentary value) and greater accessibility. The founding editor’s initial wish to make the journal “inexpensive, so that it could be more readily available all over the Muslim world and wherever else Islamic art is studied or collected” was not feasible, being “an almost impossible goal in inflationary times.”19 Advances in information technology and the internet, however, have partially fulfilled that goal. Muqarnas volumes (except for the last three) can now be downloaded from the Archnet website (archnet.org), managed by the Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT.20 One of the most visited sites in ArchNet is, in fact, our publications. The articles are also available in JSTOR, and Muqarnas is now among publications indexed in the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI). Brill has also made Muqarnas available in e-book format, which will improve distribution worldwide.

We do, however, value the journal’s physicality and even its rather quaint, familiar format, which induces a sense of continuity and longevity of tradition. This was expressed by one of our board members: “I think Muqarnas is an outstanding journal with high scholarly standards. I love the fact that it exists in print and that, after a wait of several years, the articles are then available through ArchNet and thus to areas of the world where scholars do not have access or funds for expensive book purchases (and Muqarnas is expensive). I love the fact that there is such a good journal in our field.”

Starting with Muqarnas 26 (2009), another innovation was the addition of a “Notes and Sources” section at the end of each volume. We announced that this new section may feature shorter articles, news about recent discoveries, archaeological reports, occasional reviews of a group of major books or exhibitions, debates on selected issues, and primary sources (both written and visual). In the latter category we are especially interested in publishing notes on specific documents and texts (fully transliterated), as well as on monuments, objects, and illustrated manuscripts with all their images reproduced.

The “Notes and Sources” section is intended to complement the Supplements to Muqarnas, which have started to focus largely on primary sources (visual and textual, including inscriptions), instead of monographic studies, as in the past. This change in focus, introduced under my editorship of the series, is reflected in the last five volumes (Supplements 8–12), and in the modification of the subtitle from Studies in Islamic Art and Architecture to Studies and Sources in Islamic Art and Architecture (fig. 2). The main reason behind this reorientation has been the higher demand for translated primary sources in scholarship and teaching, with accompanying original texts and images, whereas
monographs, if worthy enough, can be published by ordinary university or commercial presses. In fact, it is good news that two new field-specific monograph series have just been launched, by Brill (Arts and Archaeology of the Islamic World, edited by Marcus Milwright, Mariam Rosser-Owen, and Lorenz Korn) and by de Gruyter (Visual Histories of Islamic Cultures, edited by Finbarr Barry Flood and Avinoam Shalem). Moreover, Ars Orientalis has recently started to focus on themed volumes, some of which are on Islamic art. These developments further testify to the expansion of the field and the healthy diversification of voices in it.

We might still consider publishing monographs occasionally, including conference proceedings (formerly featured as Muqarnas special issues, which have created longer waiting periods for regularly submitted articles) and festschriften. The desire to publish primary sources more frequently than we have managed thus far (given the long gestation period of lined-up projects) has been expressed by one of our board members, a goal toward which we shall continue to strive. Nevertheless, we are reluctant to reimpose the former strict page and illustration limits on Muqarnas articles, as suggested below by the same colleague, since the annual should have the luxury to deviate from typical norms under particular circumstances:

The journal is the most important in the field—a landmark across its soon-to-be thirty volumes—and will continue to hold that position. It would obviously be nice to publish sources more regularly than in recent years—because they are widely used by scholars and have made such hugely important contributions. It would be good to beef up Arabic and Persian texts, especially Arabic sources. My one criticism of Muqarnas in recent years is its increasingly heavy weight! I remember Margie insisting on 40 pages, 20 illustrations, and the kind of argument it required from authors. Reimposing these tighter restrictions would deprive the possibility of publishing long essays, which might be better conceived as short monographs in years when a Supplement is not being produced.

In a highly specialized field with relatively few and short-lived or sporadic journals, the regular annual publication of Muqarnas (first by Yale University Press and subsequently by Brill) has been exceptional indeed. Today few would question the major impact of the journal. In fact, many of those who responded to our questionnaire characterized it as “generally excellent,” “outstanding in high scholarly standards,” and “the preeminent journal” in the field, noting its recognition and esteem among colleagues in related fields. One commentator qualified this widely shared assessment as follows:
**Muqarnas** started out with great ambition and became much more rigorous, experimental, and exciting than foreseen by Grabar in his initial notes. The problems that linger are those of the discipline. Despite the attempts to become more interdisciplinary, it is still very much a journal of art history and as such its concentration is on “high art.” In my opinion, the re-appearance of the same authors (unlike other journals in the field of art and architectural history) underlines this shortcoming and may mistakenly give *Muqarnas* the aura of an exclusive club—a qualification I keep on hearing. This is not helped by its exuberant price and limited distribution.

My “wish list” would prioritize an even broader cast of topics and geographic regions. Perhaps theme issues could be useful to attract those scholars who work on some of the "marginal" topics. I also think that the journal would benefit from a section dedicated to exhibition reviews, to be considered as archival essays. At this point in history, *Muqarnas* would be a good home to a comparative, thorough, and critical review of the new Islamic galleries in the Louvre and the Metropolitan, but also to the new wave of exhibitions on historical topics and contemporary art throughout the world. Some of the reviews could be in a conversation format between several scholars. Finally, I wonder whether it is possible to broaden the journal’s impact in the general field of visual studies, without compromising its focus on the Islamic world.

This commentator also took time to evaluate former contributions to the field:

After volume 13, new trends in the field began to emerge in the journal. The time periods covered extended from the Middle Ages to the pre-modern, and, to a lesser degree, the modern and even contemporary eras. Hence, sixteenth-century Ottoman art and architecture became a prominent presence, but the nineteenth century (also dominated by Ottoman case studies) and twentieth century (broader in scope, including critical evaluations of Hassan Fathy’s New Gourna Village and post-revolutionary Iranian architecture) also entered the repertoire. This opening was accompanied by new ways of thinking about art and architecture that recall Grabar’s introductory projections. If there is one overarching theme, it is a profound consideration of the meanings behind the forms. Political readings of architecture (for example, in interpreting urban images, monumental complexes, and even single buildings) and objects (for example, coins) resulted in some of the most exciting contributions, highlighted by studies of patronage. Cross-cultural relationships (for example, between Byzantium and the Islamic world, between the artistic and architectural productions of Mehmed II’s reign and the Renaissance, sixteenth-century Venice and Istanbul, the impact of Crusaders on Italian art, and the dialogue between European and Middle Eastern modernism) argued convincingly for an interconnected world. Economic issues came to the forefront with analyses of waqfs, as well as detailed research on the acquisition of building materials (a truly complex story was traced in the case of the Süleymaniye complex). Albeit selectively, other overlooked topics suggest productive perspectives for future work, such as environmental issues, exemplified in a recent article on the Alhambra. Along the way, geographical boundaries have been expanded considerably to include hitherto unlikely places, for example, Uganda. Even more importantly, many assumptions, among them the static nature of Islamic art and architecture, its emphasis on surface decoration at the expense of spatial and structural creativity, and the fixed formulas defining the shape of the cities, have been deconstructed for good.

Another commentator acknowledged the impact of *Muqarnas*, while thoughtfully outlining some possible new directions:

Beyond doubt, the most important contribution of *Muqarnas* to the field has been the establishment of an annual forum in which to showcase articles of quality that represent both innovative perspectives on established topics and original research that promises to broaden the scope of the field. It is clearly the preeminent journal in the field. The recent introduction of a “Notes and Sources” section is a welcome addition. A continued commitment to equal representation for early, medieval, early modern, and modern topics is essential to ensuring the ongoing success of the journal and its ability to appeal to as wide a cross-section of Islamic art historians as possible.

My impression is, however, that the readership is largely confined to those working in the field of Islamic art. Since many of the articles have the ability to appeal to a broader audience, it might be worth considering how this appeal could be brought to the attention of those working outside the field whose interests nevertheless intersect or overlap with our own. In my opinion, the most obvious room for improvement lies in expanding the geographical scope of the journal. To some extent, this reflects the limits of the canon as currently constituted, but the importance of the journal within the field is such that it could potentially initiate new trends by fostering scholarship of a high caliber on neglected periods, topics, and regions. The two most obvious regions to focus on are sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. There are colleagues undertaking pioneering work on Islamic material culture in both areas, who generally publish in archaeology or history journals, or in...
dedicated area studies journals. Such individuals might be persuaded to publish occasionally in *Muqarnas*, perhaps even in the *Supplements* series.

Pre-Mughal South Asia would be another area to develop, since the important work of Howard Crane and Tony Welch on Sultanate architecture was pioneered in the journal.21 From what I remember, recent work on the Deccan (the major growth area of scholarship on Islamicate South Asia) has yet to feature in *Muqarnas*. An article dealing with the transregional connections of the Bahmanids and their implications for artistic patronage would, for example, resonate with a long-term interest in early Ottoman connected histories, both chronologically and directly.

Rightly noting the uneven quality of articles, one board member suggested that commissioning occasional thematic volumes with guest editors might improve this shortcoming and help to further expand the frontiers of the field:

*Muqarnas* is clearly the preeminent journal on Islamic art and architecture, not only in the United States, but internationally as well—I know from what I hear from my Spanish colleagues that it is held in very high esteem. That said, I do often find the quality of the articles to be uneven... It is rare that a brilliant article simply floats in over the transom...[I]t is customary for the editor to commission special issues, usually built around a theme and usually through invited guest editors. I find that those efforts often generate coherent issues with notably higher-quality contributions. This might also be a way for *Muqarnas* to help expand the “centers” of the field—into other geographic areas beyond those usually represented, into later chronologies, into other themes, into areas of contact between Islamic art and other traditions. You might start by asking if any of the board members would be interested...And also think of commissioning promising younger scholars, who are usually full of energy and eager.

Another thing to be considered is commissioned review essays. The field is not plentiful enough yet to justify a full reviews section, but this might be a way to initiate conversations across the discipline (i.e., debate...), which is not something I see much of, at least on the surface, in the journal, and I think it would actually be good for it, and for the field.

A differing perspective on guest-edited thematic volumes, which we have occasionally published, is also worth considering:

The “theme” issues provide valuable platforms to investigate heady questions from various angles and through case studies drawn from different regions and periods. I find, for example, the volume on “Historiography and Ideology: Architectural Heritage of the ‘Lands of Rum’” extremely useful in my theory and methodology courses—regardless of whether they are on “Islamic” topics or not. This is really a superb undertaking, which identifies a set of thorny questions and addresses them relentlessly based on solid empirical research. Nevertheless, there is a strategic problem with theme volumes. They are not different than edited books and could easily be published as such. Given that *Muqarnas* comes out annually, it might be wiser to save the space for articles that cover diverse topics. [Then again, I do not know the number of articles received every year and the waiting period involved.]

It is true, in fact, that special issues have tended to create backlogs and extended the waiting period for authors by more than one or two years, given the increased number of worthy submissions that have been pouring in.22 Gone are the days when one had to scramble for suitable submissions to fill a volume, in what was a relatively small field: a welcome change that has partly contributed to the “heavy weight” criticized above. While the editors have a continued commitment to solicit works on a wide range of subjects, it is hoped that upcoming volumes might indeed feature subsets of articles with common themes, whenever possible.

Since it is not feasible to quote all the comments made by our judicious board members, I have opted to highlight thematically their assessments and “wish lists,” some of which predictably point to healthy differences of opinion. Let me start with the question of coverage. A most commonly shared desideratum is to maintain the current commitment to cover all periods, from early to modern. The commendable wish for greater coverage of modern subjects, toward which the journal has been striving, without much success, was also voiced several times. One commentator, for instance, wrote: “I think more material on nineteenth-to twenty-first-century art and architecture is needed, particularly architecture. Tentative steps in this direction have been taken, but more could be done.” As is well known, however, others have vociferously opposed the expansion of the field to modern and contemporary subjects. The scarcity of *Muqarnas* articles in this newly developing area is largely due to a shortage of submissions that go beyond descriptive or journalistic approaches.23
While some of the board members quoted above expressed the desirability of further expanding the coverage of areas and encouraging links with related non-Islamic fields, others have conveyed a resistance to watering down a field-specific traditional focus. One colleague, for example, sees little point in opening the journal to articles on Italian Renaissance artifacts with Islamic subjects, even though it can be argued that such openings might bring \textit{Muqarnas} to the attention of a broader audience beyond the Islamic field. Here is the reasoning:

After seeing the most recent issue [with the subtheme “Shared Histories of Islamic and Italian Art”], I thought the articles by Baskins and Pulido-Rull were of virtually no interest to Islamic art historians. They might be of great interest to historians, both of the West and the Islamic world, and to historians of Western art, but it seems a pity if more relevant articles had to be left out to accommodate them in \textit{Muqarnas}.

It is welcome news that “Notes and Sources” has generally been received enthusiastically. One commentator wrote: “I appreciate very much the new section for the straightforward information it conveys. Perhaps encouraging scholars to submit more could expand this section into a larger and more dynamic medium for exchange. We all have so much more primary material in our files than we can use in our lifetimes....” Another colleague appreciated the differentiation “between main articles (in-depth analysis of a given topic and its history, including critical literature review) and the notes (short pieces that update us on new discoveries but where conclusions may not yet be ready).” This was one of the reasons behind the introduction of the section, which aimed to accommodate valuable and newsworthy short pieces that in the past would have been rejected. However, a differing viewpoint was put forth by one of the commentators, who prefers that the section focus on primary sources, both visual and written: “I like the Notes and Sources section of \textit{Muqarnas}, but think that it has become something of a place for shorter articles or articles without substantial argument...I think the line should be held at introductions to unknown or reinterpreted artworks, documents, and other written sources.”

Reiterating the significance of written primary sources, another colleague has commented on the need for “more translations of essential sources for the \textit{Supplements}: Something as basic as Maqrizi’s \textit{Khiṭat} has never been translated in anything near its entirety. Would \textit{Muqarnas} be willing to take up the challenge to commission several authors for this? (It is probably more than a lifetime’s work for a single candidate.)” The answer would be yes, if this colleague might agree to be guest editor in charge of organizing such an important and timely long-term project. As in the past, we continue to encourage proposals for guest-edited volumes, as well as suggestions for promising projects and article submissions.

An often-underestimated contribution of the journal was acknowledged by one colleague:

\textit{Muqarnas} has also been quietly doing a great service by welcoming younger scholars to the broader community of art and architectural historians. The chapters derived from their dissertations disseminate information about the work they do, while registering their names into the directory of the discipline. Personally, reading many of these essays whet my appetite for the forthcoming books and, in many cases, the results have surpassed my expectations.

In the past, however, \textit{Muqarnas} has sometimes been criticized precisely for reaching out to younger scholars. Likewise, while a number of scholars in former years have disparaged the journal as too trendy, others have found it not enough so, even conservative.

Since the quality of an annual publication depends largely on the contributions it receives, future directions outlined as a “wish list” do not always materialize. (See the chronological cumulative index of articles from volumes 1 to 25, which gives a sense of the range of topics that have been covered in the journal.) It is fair to say that \textit{Muqarnas} has been, first and foremost, a reflection and barometer of the state of the field it seeks to cover. It is also our hope that it has already made, and will continue to make, a contribution to the development of that field, by providing a much-needed forum for the exchange of new information, interpretations, approaches, and trend-setting critical perspectives. As one colleague put it,

There is a remarkable breadth of approaches and materials, and while the journal can encourage new directions,
frontiers, geographies and chronologies, it is ultimately the
reflection of what is available now in its best form. I do not
think that the journal would be more widely read in art
history if further changes were made to its content...nor
would I make any in the hope of bringing about a wider
and broader readership. I think the journal’s content as it
stands reflects the broad revolution conducted in our field
since the 1990s.

Given the fact that the journal is one of the few stable
venues for publishing scholarly articles in our field, I
believe this brings with it special responsibilities toward
differing constituencies. As such, Muqarnas constitutes
a complex organism that will continue to require a
tricky balancing act in negotiating the divergent needs,
expectations, and viewpoints of a vigorously growing,
stimulating field. Most importantly, the journal has
never had a prescriptive “party line” or “politically cor-
rect” agenda. As a collective forum of the field, it is wide
open to the entire spectrum of invaluable suggestions
made above. Therefore, in celebration of the thirtieth
anniversary of Muqarnas, I enthusiastically invite the
members of our reinvigorated Editorial and Advisory
Boards, as well as our readers, to be more proactive in
taking charge of its future.

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This volume comprises regular submissions rather than
being a specially commissioned thirtieth-anniversary
issue. Nevertheless, it charts some of the new direc-
tions outlined above. The volume begins with three
historiographical articles, an ever-growing subject of
inquiry: “A Field Pioneered by Amateurs: The Collecting
and Display of Islamic Art in Early Twentieth-Century
Boston,” by Benedict Cuddon; “Ugo Monneret De Vil-
lard (1881–1954) and the Establishment of Islamic Art
Studies in Italy,” by Silvia Armando (winner of the 2011
Margaret B. Ševčenko Prize); and “Raqqa: The Forgotten
Excavation of an Islamic Site by the Ottoman
Imperial Museum in the Early Twentieth Century,” by
Ayşin Yoltar-Yıldırım.

The next three articles, while critically touching upon
historiographical issues, explore the thriving subject of
architectural and visual multiculturalism in particular
gEOGRAPHIES, between the tenth and nineteenth centu-
ries. They focus on the Mughals and Rajputs in the
Indian Subcontinent, the Fatimids in Syria and Egypt,
and the Iberian Jews with a diasporic Sephardic iden-
tity in Ottoman Salonica, respectively: “At the Margins
of Architectural and Landscape History: The Rajputs of
South Asia,” by D. Fairchild Ruggles; “Method in Mad-
ness: Recontextualizing the Destruction of Churches in
the Fatimid Era,” by Jennifer Pruitt; and “‘As If She Were
Jerusalem’: Placemaking in Sephardic Salonica,” by
Peter Christensen.

This is followed by three articles focusing on ques-
tions of interpretation, patronage, text-image interac-
tions, and aesthetics in thirteenth-century Arabic, and
fifteenth- to seventeenth-century PersiaNate manu-
script painting, an artistic medium that has attracted
unprecedented attention in recent years: “In Pursuit of
Shadows: Al-Hariri’s Maqāmāt,” by David J. Roxburgh;
“The Patronage of the Vizier Mirza Salman,” by Abolala
Soudavar; and “An Iskandarnāma of Nizami Produced
for Ibrahim Sultan,” by Lale Uluç.

The volume concludes with three essays in the “Notes
and Sources” section, which publish and interpret over-
looked sixteenth- and seventeenth-century primary
written sources from the Ottoman and Mughal empires:
“Presenting Vaṣṣāl Kalender’s Works: The Prefaces of
Three Ottoman Albums,” by Serpil Bağcı, with appen-
dices by Wheeler M. Thackston providing the tran-
scribed texts of two unpublished album prefaces, along
with the English translations; “‘Virtual Archaeology’ in
Light of a New Document on the Topkapı Palace’s
Waterworks and Earliest Buildings, circa 1509,” by Gülru
Necipoğlu; and “The Wooden Audience Halls of Shah
Jahan: Sources and Reconstruction,” by Ebba Koch.

Gülru Necipoğlu, Editor
Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Art, and Director, Aga
Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, Department
of History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University,
Cambridge, Mass.

NOTES
1. Oleg Grabar, “Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art,”
2. Ibid., 4.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 1, 4.
5. Ibid., 1–2.
6. Ibid., 7.
8. Ibid., 6, 8.
10. Ibid., 4, 9.
11. Ibid., 11.
12. Ibid., 7–8.
13. Ibid., 12.
In March 1958, the scholar Florence Day was commissioned to produce a survey of all the materials available for the research and teaching of Islamic art in the Greater Boston area. She was asked to carry out this task by John Coolidge (d. 1995), then director of the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, at the recommendation of Sir Hamilton A.R. Gibb (d. 1971), director of the newly established Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. For several years prior to this, Coolidge had been interested in setting up a program of research and teaching in the field of Islamic art; the survey was intended to develop his thinking in the area and help get the project started. Coolidge outlined the task in a letter he wrote with his offer of employment to Day: “I am anxious to have you survey the material available in Greater Boston: books, slides, photographs and, where relevant, original works of art, so that we can get some idea of what would be needed to establish a program of study in this field.” He went on to outline his longer-term aims: “Broadly speaking, I dream of the Fogg doing for the whole field of Near Eastern art during the next generation what we have been able to do in the Far Eastern field during the last.”

Up to that time, Day had not had any affiliation with Harvard. She had studied at the University of Michigan under Mehmet Aga-Oglu (d. 1949), and was principally an authority on Islamic ceramics and textiles. During the early 1950s she worked in New York at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as an assistant under the curator of Near Eastern Art, Maurice Dimand (d. 1986). When she began work at the Fogg, she had not published any research for several years, but was planning various publications, including a survey of early Islamic art to be used for teaching purposes in colleges.

Day spent the next two years working on the project and submitted her completed survey in June 1960. It consisted of descriptions and assessments of all the materials relating to Islamic art in the Boston area. In compiling her report, she visited the Fogg Museum (opened 1895), the Semitic Museum (1899 [in its present location at 6 Divinity Avenue, Cambridge, since 1903]), and the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (1866), all at Harvard University, as well as the Museum of Fine Arts (1876 [in its present location on Huntington Avenue since 1909]) and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (1903), both in Boston.

While the report was comprehensively researched and meticulously produced, it did not meet with the approval of the authorities at Harvard. In a letter to his wife, Agnes Mongan, Coolidge expressed uncertainty about its worth. “I confess I have no judgement to its value,” he wrote, “and I will not decide on whether it should be typed or not until Eric, Cary, or both have come through with a recommendation.” The Eric to whom he referred was Eric Schroeder (d. 1971), curator of the Islamic collection at the Fogg and a specialist in Persian miniature painting. Cary was Stuart Cary Welch (d. 2008), assistant curator at the Fogg and a collector and connoisseur of Persian and Indian drawings, miniatures, and manuscripts.

Schroeder’s reaction to the report was rather less equivocal than Coolidge’s. “The peculiar focus upon the early Islamic period and its meagre remains,” he wrote, “characterizes the report so strongly that it is an archaeologist’s document.” He observed that there was “no attention to the great artists where they emerge in history (16th century),” which gave “a grotesque disproportion to her report as it stands.” By “great artists,”
Benedict Cuddon

The academic study of Islamic art began in the wake of the formation of such collections. In the United States, the scholar and dealer Arthur Upham Pope (d. 1969) was one of the first to hold a formal post in the field, with an advisory curatorial position in “Muhammadan Art” at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1919. However, the first official academic post in Islamic art was created in 1933, at the University of Michigan, with an endowment from the American railroad-car manufacturer Charles Lang Freer (d. 1919); its first holder was Mehmet Aga-Oglu (d. 1949).

In Boston, the first collections of Islamic art were formed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and were centered on three main institutions: the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard, and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. At the MFA it is not clear when exactly the acquisition of Islamic art began, but by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century there were already some Islamic materials in the collection. The Fogg began to assemble its Islamic collection around the same period, after the end of World War I. Similarly, Isabella Stewart Gardner (d. 1924) began to collect Islamic material around the turn of the century.

In the early days, the collections of these institutions were formed through the efforts of a small group of pioneer collectors. The most important of these figures was Denman Waldo Ross (d. 1935) (fig. 1). Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, he graduated from Harvard in 1875. After completing a doctoral degree in economic history, he developed an additional interest in art. He became a trustee of the MFA in 1895, and in 1899 was appointed as a special lecturer on design at the Architectural School at Harvard. In 1904 he began to travel extensively to India, Cambodia, China, Japan, Mexico, and Peru, during which time he bought a considerable amount of art. Ross acquired his enthusiasm for Islamic art late in life and it was principally Persian art that intrigued him. It might at first seem curious that he should have cultivated such a pursuit; although he travelled to the Islamic world, he seems not to have liked much of the art he saw there. However, over the course of his lifetime he built up a sizable collection of Persian material, in particular miniature paintings, drawings, luster tiles, and rugs. He gave many of his purchases to the Boston...
museums; in total, around 1,500 objects to the Fogg, and perhaps 11,000 to the MFA. He was also involved in one of the most important acquisitions for the MFA, when, in 1914, he helped to broker the purchase of the Goloubew Collection, which consisted mainly of Persian and Indian paintings and drawings.

Another important figure was Hervey Wetzel (d. 1918), also a graduate of Harvard College (class of 1911) (fig. 2). Wetzel was an only child and after his parents died while he was a student he was left with considerable means. He shared many of Ross’s interests in art and collecting, and in 1912 they travelled together to Asia. Later, in 1914, Wetzel became an associate of the MFA covering Persian and Indian art. After further travel in Asia, in 1916 he enrolled as a doctoral candidate in the Graduate School at Harvard, choosing “Persian and Mohammedan Art” as his special field. He learned Arabic and was able to catalogue the manuscripts of his own collection (which he had begun to assemble after his travels with Ross) and those of the MFA. He was offered a position as curator of the Islamic collection there, but because he had already enrolled in military training he declined the offer. Like Ross, Wetzel gave generously to the museums in Boston. He died of pneumonia in 1918, while working for the Red Cross in France, and left half of his collection to the Fogg and the other half to the MFA. He also bequeathed $100,000 to the Fogg for the purchase of new objects.

Besides Ross and Wetzel, another active collector was Isabella Stewart Gardner (fig. 3). She first visited the Middle East in 1874, at the age of thirty four, on a tour of Egypt. However, it was not until the 1890s that she...
started buying Islamic art. Over the next twenty years she steadily built up a small collection of objects, purchasing pieces through dealers or through friends, though her Islamic material was never anywhere near as extensive as that of either Ross or Wetzel.  

For their collecting, these figures depended partly upon dealers of Islamic art who were just beginning to establish themselves in the United States. These dealer/collectors included Armenians such as Dikran Kelekian (d. 1951) and Hagop Kevorkian (d. 1962), who both played very active roles in selling and lending material to museums as well as to collectors in the United States, including Ross and Gardner. In addition, in 1903 Kelekian donated materials to the textile gallery in the MFA, and in 1910 he lent even more items to the museum, while Kevorkian also donated objects that year.  

Beyond this circle of collectors and the dealers who supplied them there were other influential figures who helped to shape this early period of collecting. Foremost among them was the scholar, collector, and art connoisseur Bernard Berenson (d. 1959), who had a strong predilection for Islamic art and, although not based in Boston himself, exerted an important influence upon the art world there (fig. 4). Berenson was a student of Oriental languages, learning Sanskrit, Hebrew, and Aramaic when he was at Harvard (1884–87). In the middle of his career he developed an interest in Asian art and started purchasing Chinese, Japanese, and Tibetan painting, sculpture, and ceramics. During the same
period, he also bought Persian art, forming a collection of miniatures and manuscripts between 1910 and 1913. Berenson also played an active role in encouraging others to buy and collect in the field, including Gardner, who bought her Islamic miniatures through him. He also strongly promoted the academic study of Islamic art. At different points he encouraged Harvard to take on someone in an academic position, promoting both Rudolf Riefstahl, a scholar/dealer based in Europe, and then Mehmet Aga-Oğlu; he also pressed Harvard to publish more academic research in the field.

CURATORS AND EARLY MODES OF DISPLAY

These, then, were some of the key figures involved in the acquisition and collecting of Islamic art in the United States. But who were the people looking after the collections at this time? At the Fogg, there was no one curating the Islamic collection until the 1930s. At the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Gardner herself decided how the materials should be displayed and arranged. However, at the MFA there were particular individuals working in connection with the Islamic material. The principal curator of the Islamic collection was Frank Gair Macomber (d. 1941), who ran a fire insurance business (the MFA was one of his customers) and supervised the Islamic material in his spare time. He also collected in the field, specializing in Middle Eastern arms and armor. Another figure was Garrick Borden (d. 1912), who was mainly involved in teaching on the subject. Originally from Pennsylvania, he had taught in England (in London, Oxford, and Cambridge) and also in the United States, at the University of California. He worked as a docent in the MFA, lecturing on a range of subjects, including Islamic art, and also at the Harvard Extension School (est. 1910), where he delivered a series of forty illustrated lectures on Islamic art in the 1911–12 academic year.

In this early period there was a well-established sense of an overarching category of “Islamic” art, though it was more often referred to as “Saracenic” or “Mohammedan.” Within this framework, the first three centuries of the Islamic era were seen as the crucial formative phase. As Macomber reportedly explained in a lecture: “Saracenic art is supposed to have had its origin during the Sessanianan [sic] dynasty of Persia...[In] 650 the Arabs conquered Persia and their restless fancy and taste for color and ornament added the final element to the product we now call Mohammedan or Saracenic art.” Macomber's ideas were echoed by Borden: the “study of Moslem history,” he wrote in a pamphlet entitled “Reasons why teachers of history should study Moslem History, Civilization and Art,” is “the study of the formative period of a great living civilization which is daily becoming of more importance to us [italics mine].”

The conception of Islamic art as a tradition that was formed in the first centuries of the Islamic era had a long pedigree dating back to the nineteenth century and was based on the Hegelian meta-narrative of history that saw the rise and fall of civilizations as the key force in shaping human history. Within this framework, all civilizations passed through an initial formative phase, remained for a certain period of time, and then ultimately declined. This conception of history was passed on through generations of Western scholars like Edward Gibbon and Arnold Toynbee, and onto Orientalists such as Hamilton A.R. Gibb. When applied to Islamic history, the early centuries of the Islamic era were seen as the most important phase, since it was in this period that the key features of Islamic civilization were believed to have been forged. According to this paradigm, the “essence” of Islamic art emerged in the first three centuries after the Prophet Muhammad. After this, the rest of Islamic history consisted of various derivations that could never approach the cultural accomplishments of this critical early period.

But while this overarching view of the field did exist, in this period the notion of Islamic art as a distinct category had not yet acquired the rigid parameters that would define it in later years. In the early twentieth century, “Islamic art” often held an ambiguous position in conventional classification, defying any kind of neat categorization. At the MFA, for the first decade of the twentieth century, Islamic material was actually housed in the department of Western art. As the museum explained, “by western art is meant that developed in Europe (and the nearer orient), or under European influence, since classical times.” There was some degree of separation given to art from the Islamic world, with most of the Islamic objects displayed in a gallery.
called the Nearer Orient Room. However, it did not have a purely Islamic focus, as Peruvian and Coptic textiles were displayed alongside. And indeed, not all the Islamic objects were held in the Nearer Orient Room; since the collection was by and large arranged by material, Persian ceramics were housed in the part of the museum devoted to glass and ceramics.\textsuperscript{35}

There was a similarly nebulous situation at the Fogg. Here, early exhibitions often included both Islamic material and European works of art. A show in 1914 of loan material from the J. Pierpont Morgan Collection in New York consisted of Persian and Indo-Persian miniatures and Koran leaves, along with English, French, and Italian paintings and manuscripts.\textsuperscript{36} Likewise, in the room at the Fogg that housed the Wetzel Collection, a whole range of different art forms were clustered together, with Persian miniatures and Arabic calligraphy displayed together with Chinese and Italian art.\textsuperscript{37}

At the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, this tendency was even more pronounced. The entire museum was laid out in a highly idiosyncratic fashion, as prescribed by the founder herself. Gardner’s Islamic objects were dispersed all over the museum, with little regard for grouping them according to region or period. She displayed a Persian carpet in the “Titian Room,” along with Titian’s \textit{Rape of Europa} and a miscellany of European (mainly Italian) art. The “Tapestry Room” contained the majority of her Islamic material: a Persian silk, a Hafiz manuscript, a Persian lacquered box and a Persian Koran stand, an Arabic treatise on automatic devices, a thirteenth-century Arabic manuscript, and two Mongol ones. But all this sat together with a Velázquez painting of Pope Innocent X, a tapestry depicting scenes from the life of Cyrus the Great, and a host of other objects including Italian writing desks, German brass plates, and other European works of art in a variety of media.\textsuperscript{38}

The custom of displaying very disparate objects together, a common practice in the United States at this time, derived from the influence of the Aesthetic Movement, which flourished in America in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Drawing on the ideas of John Ruskin and the Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain, it encouraged looking abroad for designs that could be used to reinvigorate the American arts industry.\textsuperscript{39} Above all, it promoted the idea that the search for beauty in art would inspire a new generation of American designers and artists. With this emphasis on foreign art forms and beauty, the Aesthetic Movement stressed the accessibility of styles of decoration from the past and the belief that art did not have to be viewed within its historical context in order to be appreciated. When the main objective was to find beauty in a work of art, it was not necessary to know about the culture and society that had produced that object; cross-cultural transcendent beauty could be appreciated by anyone in any context. It was partly because of the proliferation of these ideas that much art at this time was displayed divorced from its specific historical context.\textsuperscript{40}

The Aesthetic Movement influenced some of the key figures in Boston in this period, and Ross was clearly a disciple. As one of his obituarists noted, “his contempt for the historical and archaeological point of view—as a trained historian—was a curious contradiction.”\textsuperscript{41} He acknowledged as much himself. In recalling his travels in Asia with Wetzel, he wrote, “We were not archaeologists. We were not historians. We were simply lovers of order and the beautiful as they come to pass in the works of man supplementing the works of Nature.”\textsuperscript{42} This outlook was also promoted by Berenson, who strongly believed in connoisseurship and aesthetic appreciation. He saw art objects as individual works of beauty and genius, not as products of a particular historical environment. It was this sort of formalist approach that enabled Berenson to juxtapose Persian miniatures with Chinese artifacts at \textit{Villa I Tatti}.\textsuperscript{43}

Another noteworthy feature of this early era of display was the attention devoted to Persian art, which, within the broad conception of the field at this time, was regarded as the highest form of Islamic art, above that of the Turks and the Arabs. This ethnically defined hierarchy was the product of a viewpoint that saw inherent racial characteristics as a central force in the evolution of human societies and the belief that race was the main determinant of artistic expression. According to this perspective, because Persians were of Indo-European racial stock they were inherently superior to the Semites
and the Turks. These ethno-racial discourses originated from Orientalist paradigms about the ethnic composition of the Middle East. However, in the nineteenth and twentieth century they also provided the framework for emerging nationalist interpretations of history. It was under the influence of these two forces that the discourse about the racial features of Islamic art flourished.

In this milieu, Persian art was often favorably compared with European art. For example, on the occasion of a display of Persian and Indian manuscripts, drawings, and paintings at the MFA, the museum bulletin drew a direct comparison between these works and Renaissance art, remarking that “the drawings are some of them worthy of Clouet in minute and exact rendering of character.” Elsewhere, Bihzad was described as “the Raphael of the East.” Such attitudes were also being expressed in emerging scholarship, with academics studying Persian art for the first time borrowing ideas and frames of reference from Renaissance art and applying them to their new field of study.

Aside from the Aesthetic Movement and ethno-racial discourses, early collecting habits were also shaped by emerging trends within American society, including a rapid increase in consumerism in the United States. With the growth of a consumer culture there developed a sort of commodity fetishism, as wealthy individuals built up collections of material objects with which to surround themselves in a flattering manner and establish their status in society. At the same time, new public institutions were being founded that often became sites where social status was enacted. In this era, museums rapidly became prime venues for articulating social identities. Often this was the expression of individual and family status. But it could also be an expression of municipal pride: donors to museums were often motivated by the desire to boost the position of their city, and the collecting of art became one arena in which the rivalry among American cities in this period was played out.

An evocative appraisal of the MFA in its early days by Matthew Prichard (d. 1936), assistant director of the Museum from 1903 to 1906, gives an idea of the forces that shaped the institution:

Speaking of the Ross collection, I observe an unwillingness, on the part of those in charge of installation, to mark the objects which I have given to the museum with the words ‘Ross collection’. I have repeatedly asked to have this done, but it is not done...I want the words Ross collection attached to every object or group of objects which has been given or loaned by me. By that means I shall be able to speak to the people of Boston long after I am dead, as in a book written or a picture painted.

Thus, in this early period of the twentieth century, the collecting and display of Islamic art were shaped by a variety of forces. The Aesthetic Movement, the influence of ethno-racial discourses about Islamic art, the rise of consumerism, and the pursuit of social status all influenced the activities of collectors and the exhibitions that they organized.
ETHNO-RACIAL INTERPRETATIONS

After the first decade of the twentieth century, gradual changes took place in the Islamic art scene in Boston. At the MFA, Islamic art steadily moved out of its ambiguous position in the Department of Western Art. In 1909, after the museum moved from its original location in Copley Square to Huntington Avenue, the Nearer Orient Room had more of an exclusively Islamic focus. And from 1910 onwards, “Muhammedan art” started to be listed in a separate category in the museum bulletin. In this period there were also changes in personnel. In 1917, Ananda Coomaraswamy (d. 1947) arrived at the museum and founded the Department of Indian Art, which subsequently absorbed the Islamic material.

However, from this point on, far fewer displays of Islamic art were assembled and relatively less attention was devoted to the Islamic collection. Material continued to be acquired steadily in the 1920s and early 1930s, but, compared to the previous two decades, this was a quiet period. After Ross died in 1935, activity decreased even further. From this point on, with the exception of steady donations of Persian art from Edward Jackson Holmes (president of the museum from 1934 until his death in 1950), acquisitions declined.

As activity at the MFA decreased, the Fogg Museum stepped in to take its place. From the 1930s onwards, it became the most important venue for Islamic art, particularly Persian art. In 1930, the Fogg held an exhibition of Persian paintings from the thirteenth century to the seventeenth, again consisting of loans from the Morgan Library in New York. Displays continued through the 1930s; in the spring of 1934, photographs of Persian architecture from the collection of Arthur Upham Pope were exhibited, followed in the winter by a display of Persian miniatures, pottery, and textiles. After this, Persian miniatures from the Ross Collection were shown in 1935, Persian pottery in 1936, and Persian miniatures, pottery, and sculpture in 1937.

The surge of interest in Persian art in this period was heavily influenced by the contemporary political climate and the emerging discourse on Iranian nationalism, which emphasized the existence of a single Persian national identity and saw the Persians as a pure race that had existed undiluted since the era of the Achaemenid Empire (ca. 550–330 B.C.). This conception of Persian identity was articulated simultaneously in different centers around the world. In Iran, it was being promoted by members of the Pahlavi regime, who were trying to establish their new conception of Iranian national identity based on its mythic Persian origins. In the West, it was being voiced by academics and scholars such as Arthur Upham Pope, who were promoting the study of Persian art and culture. Often these forces came to work in tandem, as can be seen, for example, in the founding of the American Institute for Persian Art and Archaeology, an academic organization set up in 1930 by Pope and others, with strong support from the Iranian government.

Nationalist ideology based on the idea of a pure Persian racial identity played an important role in shaping how the Fogg’s exhibitions in this period were interpreted. In his reviews in the Boston Evening Transcript, Henry S. Francis, an assistant to the directors at the Fogg, interpreted all the displays through an ethno-racial mode. Concerning the 1930 show, he discussed the supposed aversion of Muslims to figural representation, noting that this did not always apply in Persia, where “the time-honored inherent culture of their venerable race broke through.” He adopted a similar focus in his review of the 1934 winter show, in which he remarked that “we are immediately aware of an intriguing racial character that runs through it all,” and went on to say (rather distastefully) that “one is tempted to guess that the Persians must be a race of large-lens like eyes and thin nervous fingers to create, or enjoy, such minute workmanship.”

Although the ethno-racial mode of interpretation was more marked in this period, it is important to keep in mind that a notion of “Islamic” art still existed and Persian art was usually viewed through an Islamic “lens.” From this perspective, Islamic art existed within a clearly definable time frame from the 600s to the 1600s. As Francis wrote in his review of the 1930 show, “the 17th century onward showed a rapid decline. The knowledge of European models wholly supplanted native, and the character completely changed. Persian painting ceased to exist.” This statement expressed the persistent idea that the Islamic world constituted a “pure,” self-contained artistic tradition that was disrupted and irrevocably altered by the arrival of European
modernity. Within this framework, truly “Islamic” art disappeared under the impact of the West and during the era of modernity. From this point on, the narrative went, artists struggled to assimilate Western approaches toward artistic production and were forever engaged in a process of passive imitation; trapped in a cultural void between “tradition” and “modernity,” their efforts to emulate Western styles effectively corrupted and polluted their own indigenous traditions. These ideas owed their origins to colonial narratives of Islamic history that emphasized the “decay” of Islamic civilization and the cultural bankruptcy of the Islamic world. The decline of indigenous tradition and the failure to assimilate exterior practices signified a lack of cultural self-confidence and the incapacity of the Islamic world to confront modernity.

THE SEARCH FOR A CURATOR

The 1930s were thus a busy time at the Fogg. But despite all of this activity there was one persistent problem: the lack of a curator to supervise the collections and exhibitions. As noted, in this period the only full-time Islamic specialist in America was Mehmet Aga-Oglu, who was based at the University of Michigan and the Detroit Museum of Fine Arts (fig. 5). Aga-Oglu had grown up in Turkey and studied in Russia, Germany, and Austria before becoming director of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art in Istanbul in 1928. Then, in 1929, he left Turkey for America. At the time of his departure, he was connected with a move to Harvard, when he was recommended for a position by Bernard Berenson, who wrote about him to Paul Sachs, associate director of the Fogg:

I don’t see him at Detroit...My ideal for him and for Harvard would be that he profess Islamicic [sic] art in my beloved Alma Mater. It is a far more important field than I could have imagined before going to Turkey. Aga Oglu has more over material up his sleeve, and ideas which will make him an ornament to any institution that can claim him. I should wish it to be Harvard.

In the end, Aga-Oglu did go to Detroit. In the early 1930s he had occasional employment in the Museum of Anthropology at Michigan. Then, in 1933, he was invited by the University of Michigan to organize a department of Islamic art and was appointed Research Fellow in the History of Islamic Art and Culture before going on to become, by 1935, Freer Fellow and Lecturer on Oriental Art and then Associate Professor of the History of Islamic Art. He also presided over the research seminar on Islamic art and was editor of the journal *Ars Islamica*.

However, throughout the 1930s Berenson continued to promote the idea of Aga-Oglu joining the Fogg Museum or the MFA in some capacity. In 1932, this possibility was met with suspicion by the authorities at the former, who were concerned that his motives might be suspect. Edward Waldo Forbes (d. 1969), then director of the Fogg, contacted various people to request information about Aga-Oglu, including Howland Shaw, a former Harvard student then working at the United States embassy in Istanbul. In his letter, Forbes outlined what he understood as the problem:

There is a Turkish scholar named Aga-Oglu...he has been recommended to the Boston Museum and the Fogg Museum as a possible scholar whom we might use as an authority on Near Eastern art...[W]e have heard it inti-
at the exhibition of Persian art at Burlington House in London and soon after joined him in Iran to survey the Masjid-i Jamiʿ in Isfahan. Pope subsequently invited Schroeder to contribute to the *Survey of Persian Art*, for which he wrote the sections on early Islamic architecture and the architecture of the Seljuk period.75 In the winter of 1935–36, Schroeder came to America and began working at the MFA as a volunteer assistant to Ananda Coomaraswamy.

When he joined the Fogg in 1938, Schroeder was given the title of “Keeper of Persian Art”; his principal duty was to write a catalogue of the Persian paintings in the collection.76 During his first ten years at the Fogg, Schroeder did much to promote the display of the Islamic collection. The presentation of material continued in the same vein as before, focusing on Persian art and its ethno-racial qualities. In many ways, Schroeder can be seen as a direct intellectual descendent of Pope.77

The issue arose again in 1937, when Aga-Oglu approached the Fogg directly. This time he enquired about continuing the publication of *Ars Islamica*; he was leaving Michigan and anxious to find a new home for the journal.73 Again Harvard was unable to pursue the issue. It may have been because of lingering suspicions about his motives, but there is no definite evidence to suggest this was the case.

However, soon after this the Fogg did find a curator for the Islamic collection—Eric Schroeder (fig. 6), husband of Forbes’s niece. Born in Britain, Schroeder had studied at Oxford, where he read literary greats and modern history.74 After Oxford, a chance opportunity to dig in Mesopotamia sparked an interest in the Middle East. Then, in 1931, he encountered Arthur Upham Pope at the exhibition of Persian art at Burlington House in London and soon after joined him in Iran to survey the Masjid-i Jamiʿ in Isfahan. Pope subsequently invited Schroeder to contribute to the *Survey of Persian Art*, for which he wrote the sections on early Islamic architecture and the architecture of the Seljuk period.75 In the winter of 1935–36, Schroeder came to America and began working at the MFA as a volunteer assistant to Ananda Coomaraswamy.

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Shaw’s response made it clear that Aga-Oglu was trustworthy. In his letter, he told Forbes, “I have spoken with Halil Bey, former director of the Museum of Antiquities in Istanbul, and Halil Bey had a high opinion of Aga-Oglu as a scholar.”69

The other person Forbes contacted was Joseph Upton, assistant curator in the Department of Near Eastern Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In his response, Upton expressed concerns about nationalist sentiments in Aga-Oglu’s work: “I believe he has a broad knowledge of Muhammedan art and of the cultural background but I believe his historical and stylistic opinions are colored and biased by an attempt to make every source of inspiration and development in the field Turkish.”70 He also expressed concern over giving such positions to non-Americans.71 In the end, however, both these issues were moot, since neither the Fogg nor the MFA was in a position to hire anyone. As Forbes explained to Upton: “There is no immediate question of either the Boston Museum or the Fogg Museum employing him at the present time because the money does not seem to be forthcoming just now.”72

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The London exhibition of 1931, which Pope had master-minded, and his subsequent working relationship with Pope made a huge impression upon Schroeder and shaped his future approach toward Islamic and Persian
art. Like Pope, he saw Persian art as an expression of the inherent racial characteristics of the Persian people, and in his writing he celebrated the timeless features of Persian artistic achievement. “As a race,” he wrote, “it seems evident that the Persians have been the greatest decorators which the world has ever produced.” He was particularly interested in the aesthetic features of Persian art, writing in the news release for an exhibition of Persian miniatures: “those who are interested in decoration will find the unique brilliance of Persian colour-harmonies fascinating.”

But it is important to note that Schroeder’s interest in aesthetics was not limited to Persian art but applied to the wider sphere of all Islamic art. As he explained in an entry on Islamic art in the Encyclopedia of the Arts, “Muslims...have never looked to artists for special insights or meanings. They regarded the arts as we regard the decorative arts.” Schroeder’s statement was typical of the thinking of the time. His approach was part of a tradition of studying the Orient that celebrated what was perceived as the uniquely sensual character of that part of the world and the notion that Islamic art was “pure decoration.” Within this approach little effort was made to interpret or situate objects in a historical context, or to ask how objects were informed by that context.

While in the 1930s displays at the Fogg focused on Persian art and its ethno-racial character, in the 1940s there was a shift. In 1942, the museum exhibited Persian calligraphy, paintings, bronzes, pottery, and sculpture dating from the eleventh to the seventeenth century. Although this show consisted of works of Persian art, the exhibition was actually billed as a display of “Islamic” art (as opposed to the formerly current terms “Saracenic” or “Mohammedan”). Until then, the term “Islamic” had largely been absent from exhibitions at the Fogg. But from this point onwards, its use became increasingly common. In 1945, another exhibition was held, this time described as “Treasures from the Islamic Collection.” By the end of the decade, this trend was well established. The starkest illustration of it can be found in “an exhibition expository of the Islamic style” organized by Schroeder in 1949. The news release explained that the display would “emphasize the essential unity of the Islamic style...[C]onsisting of a limited number of objects, the show will call attention to certain easily observed qualities common to all. Thus, instead of merely sensing the unity of Islamic style, the visitor will come to know in what that unity exists.”

A central element of this notion of Islamic art was the idea that this tradition was essentially different from that of the West. As the news release stated: “All Islamic buildings from the Alhambra to the Taj Mahal share qualities of repose and refinement which differentiate them from those on the opposite side of the Mediterranean.” Here the essential “otherness” of Islamic art was emphasized through the carving up of world geography into fundamentally distinct artistic zones. This otherness was directly attributed to the religion of Islam which, as the theory went, had developed an artistic outlook that permeated every aspect of artistic endeavor: “S]ince water vessels, plates and bronzes display these same traits, there may well be some connection between the artistic forms which Mohammedanism inspired and the religion itself.” This conception of Islamic art thus carried with it a set of associated ideas: that all Islamic art held certain features in common and that these traits signified such art to be fundamentally different from that of other traditions.

This shift toward an Islamic mode of interpretation, as manifested in the Fogg displays of the 1940s, was almost certainly inspired by a recently published book chapter on “The Character of Islamic Art,” by Richard Ettinghausen, in which he outlined the essential features of “the peculiar character of Islamic art.” Although he acknowledged regional differences within the Islamic world, he argued these were “only variations of the general Islamic aspect.” Schroeder knew Ettinghausen and in this period they also collaborated on a book about Islamic art designed as a college manual for teaching undergraduates.

These ideas about Islamic art did not replace pre-existing notions about racial hierarchies but were rather grafted onto that tradition of thinking. The news release for the 1949 exhibition at the Fogg explained that in Persia the ethno-racial and Islamic influences came together in a combination of the Islamic style and the distinct character of the Persian people: “[I]n Persia, with its artistically gifted people, the idea that art is a more serious kind of endeavor than politics finds
support in the beauty of surviving monuments. It was this view of life that gave the energy necessary for the triumphs of the Islamic style.90 The ethno-racial discourse and the universalist religious discourse had always coexisted as two sides of the same intellectual tradition. What occurred in this period was not one being eclipsed by the other, but rather the strengthening of the religious discourse within the framework of the ethno-racial one.

JOHN COOLIDGE AND NEW CONCERNS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

As the century progressed into the 1950s, further developments had an impact on the study of Islamic art in Boston. In 1948, John Coolidge was appointed director of the Fogg Museum (fig. 7). From a well-established Cambridge family, Coolidge studied at Harvard, graduating in 1935, as well as at New York University (1936–43). During World War II, he worked in the U.S. navy, and after the war taught briefly at the University of Pennsylvania, before joining Harvard in 1947 as assistant professor in the Department of Fine Arts.91

Coolidge arrived at the Fogg with a clear ambition to begin a new era in the study and teaching of art history at Harvard. In recent years Harvard had lost its lofty place in the field of fine arts as Yale and the Institute of Fine Arts (part of New York University) came to the fore.92 Coolidge was anxious to restore Harvard to its position of preeminence, and one of the areas he identified where it could build up its position was Near Eastern and Islamic art. As he wrote to McGeorge Bundy (d. 1996), then dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences: “as far as I can make out, nowhere in this country does anybody teach Islamic art. Personally I should like this to be Harvard’s specialty.”93

To do this he brought in key new personnel. Among the first was Joseph McMullan (d. 1973), who held the position of Honorary Research Fellow in Islamic Art from 1950 to 1951. A businessman who made a fortune from steel-pipe manufacturing, McMullan had a lifelong passion for rugs, particularly those from the Islamic world, and became a high-profile collector and connoisseur. In addition to collecting, he was an important vehicle for the wider dissemination of knowledge about Islamic art, and was often invited to give lectures and talks on his subject to local intellectual groups. He also donated generously to Harvard to support the study of Islamic art.94

Another key person was Stuart Cary Welch (fig. 8). From 1952 to 1954 he pursued graduate studies in Islamic art at Harvard (though without gaining a doctoral degree), and in 1957 was appointed assistant curator at the Fogg. He would later become a lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts.95 Welch’s presence helped to spur on activity related to the study of Islamic art, mainly because of his contributions to the Fogg’s collections. He spent much of the 1950s travelling in the Middle East and Asia, acquiring material for the museum. Most of the items he purchased were Persian and Indian paintings, manuscripts, and drawings, reflecting his particular interests and taste. With his involvement, John Coolidge’s enthusiasm for the field rapidly developed. As Coolidge wrote to Welch in the summer of 1957: “Eric Schroeder soon converted me to
Islamic art and anything that furthers the study of this subject at Harvard gives me keen personal happiness. Your coming here has done more to further this cause than anything since I’ve been around.”

These developments coincided with a period in which the United States was undergoing fundamental changes in its relationship with the Middle East. After World War II, just as the United States emerged as a global superpower, the Middle East, with its enormous oil reserves, began to play a critical role in the Cold War. There was widespread fear that states in the region were at risk of falling to Communism. As a result of these strategic concerns, the U.S. government had much at stake in the Middle East, and the desire to control the region’s oil resources and impose a degree of hegemony upon it became central to U.S. foreign policy. As part of this endeavor, a number of strategic studies centers were established, with the aim of generating policy-relevant knowledge about the region. Much of the money for these centers came from foreign policy foundations whose interests were connected with those of the U.S. government. At Harvard, the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) was set up in 1954.98

From the outset, the focus of the Center was on the modern Middle East. It aimed to address contemporary issues through the multidisciplinary study of the region, covering fields such as language, history, politics, economics, and culture.99 In 1955, Sir Hamilton Gibb left his position as professor of Arabic at Oxford to become director of CMES. He brought with him a particular vision of how the Middle East should be studied and promoted the idea of “academic amphibians,” a species of scholar who would be able to cross easily between different disciplines.100 As part of this vision, he took a keen interest in art history. In 1958, he wrote to Coolidge:

We at this center have been thinking for some time about the ways and means in which the art of the Middle East could be activated as a subject of study. I need hardly emphasise to you the importance of the aesthetic and practical arts as one of the fundamentals by which a culture can be assessed and analysed, and while the art of the Middle East has its importance for students in many fields, the arts of the Islamic civilisation are of special significance to students working in or associated with this center.101

CMES undoubtedly had a marked and early influence upon the study of Islamic art at Harvard, as can be seen from an exhibition of Turkish art held at the Fogg in 1954. This display, put together by Schroeder and McMullan as part of a new course on the Turks in history, entitled “The Ottoman Empire and the Near East Since the End of the 13th Century,”102 consisted of a wide range of materials and was meant to “identify visually the characteristics of the Turks themselves.”103 In some respects the show continued pre-existing trends. The ethno-racial paradigm was strongly apparent in the press release, which explained that “a contrast between Turkish and non-Turkish art in the medieval Islamic style will be the basis of an attempt to connect formal differences with national characteristics.”104 But in other respects this display marked a shift in the way the material was interpreted. Rather than treating the decorative aspects of Turkish art, or the characteristics of a supposed “Islamic” style, the explicit aim of the show, in keeping with the Center’s interest in current affairs, was to demonstrate the development of the Turks

Fig. 8. Stuart Cary Welch (1928–2008), Hyderabad, India, 2007. (Photo: Bill Wood, courtesy of Thomas Welch)
through history in order to understand their position in the contemporary world. By attempting to consider objects through their function and meaning in their original historical context, the show signified a moment where the study of Islamic art began to move away from a purely aesthetic approach toward situating objects in the wider sphere of socio-political history.105

Thus, in the 1950s a combination of factors—the arrival of new personnel, America’s changing relationship with the Middle East, the creation of CMES—came together to act as a spur towards the increased study of Islamic art. While these changes were taking place, Coolidge took an ever-keener interest in the field and began to articulate his own vision of why it was important to study Islamic art. As he explained in a memorandum entitled “A Teaching Curatorship of Near Eastern Art”:

There is no need to emphasize the rapidly increasing importance of the Near East in the world today. This situation imposes new responsibilities on the United States. Our country’s role is to promote peace in a part of the world peculiarly riven by national, racial, and religious hatreds. We can only begin to succeed in this role if future generations of Americans gain some understanding of the area’s full range of cultures: Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Greco-Roman, Muslim, and Jewish.106

Elsewhere he wrote:

The events of the past year have forced the United States to assume new, serious and permanent commitments in the Near East. Policy in a democracy is determined by public opinion, and over the long run sound policy depends upon sound public understanding. To promote such understanding Harvard should encourage the study of all Near Eastern cultures....[n]o approach is more accessible, no method more revealing than the study of Near Eastern art.107

While Coolidge was clearly devoted to developing the study of Islamic art for its own sake, his ambitions were also shaped by underlying geopolitical concerns such as oil, hegemony, and American power in the Middle East. And, crucially, Coolidge was an outsider to the field. Although interested in Islamic art, he was not a specialist, and many of the things he expected it to deliver were unrealistic. In relating the field of Islamic art history to contemporary political affairs, Coolidge was implicitly searching for overarching generalizations that could be extracted from an abstract and timeless conception of “Islamic” culture and applied to a seemingly unfathomable part of the world in order to render it more understandable. Coolidge’s statements are an articulation of a problem that has hung over the study of Islamic art for several decades, namely, the expectation that as an academic discipline it should be able to provide relevant knowledge about the current affairs of the Middle East.108

With his growing interest in Islamic art, Coolidge began to devise schemes to expand its study. One of his main concerns was how to convert Harvard’s Semitic Museum into a center for teaching Islamic art, an idea first proposed in the early 1950s by McMullan and himself. At that stage, before CMES had been established, they had envisaged overhauling the entire building and converting it into a center for research and teaching about the Middle East.109 Later, after CMES had been founded, Coolidge focused his efforts on raising money so that the museum could house a department devoted to Near Eastern art.110 In the end, however, these plans were not realized. Funding was a problem and Coolidge also suspected that there might be strong personal feelings attached to the disbanding of the museum. In the summer of 1957 he concluded that “for the time being at least I visualise the Fogg providing the headquarters for the study of Near Eastern Art.”111

Thus, in 1958, Coolidge was keen to press ahead with his plans, having decided that the Fogg Museum would be the best place to house a center for Islamic art. But now he needed to know what materials were available to teach the subject. He therefore commissioned Florence Day, who had originally been brought to his attention by Sir Hamilton Gibb, to produce her survey assessing all the resources in Boston that could be used to develop the field.112 Coolidge thought that once armed with this knowledge, they would be equipped to launch a program in Islamic art.

However, as noted earlier, the report was not met with enthusiasm. But what was so problematic about it? Why were Coolidge and Schroeder unimpressed by it? The answer lies in the nature of the report Day produced. She saw the study of Islamic art as an archaeological pursuit, believing that the true essence of the subject was to be found in the early centuries of the Islamic era. As she wrote in her introduction:
In the 1930s, activity shifted from the MFA to the Fogg Art Museum. In this period, attention was focused on Persian art, which was interpreted in terms of its racial and decorative qualities. These activities were heavily shaped by emerging discourses about Iranian nationalism that were being articulated simultaneously by scholars in the West and by nationalists in Iran.

In the 1940s and 1950s, activity continued to be focused on the Fogg. In this period, the study of Islamic art was more closely subjected to academic and intellectual agendas. Some of these were positive: as Islamic art was connected with other fields, the interpretative framework in which objects were displayed was broadened. Others, however, were problematic: with the changing position of the United States in global politics and the rise of the Middle East as an area of major strategic interest, the exigencies of contemporary politics led outsiders to the field to make demands upon it that it could not meet.

Throughout the report Day continued in the same vein, only ever giving scant attention to later Islamic art. It was thus a perfect encapsulation of the normative view expressed by Frank Macomber and Garrick Borden half a century previously. Neither Coolidge nor Schroeder shared this perspective. Coolidge expected Islamic art to offer insights into the contemporary Middle East, and a survey of archaeological holdings offered no prospect of this. Schroeder, meanwhile, thought the report useless because of its heavy focus on early Islamic art, to the exclusion of the later periods in its development. Operating within an ethno-racial paradigm that saw sensual decoration and the Persian miniatures of the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries as the ne plus ultra of Islamic art, he felt the report grossly skewed the entire field and neglected what he regarded as the most distinguished period in the Islamic artistic tradition. Denman Ross had also adhered to this point of view, though to a lesser extent.

In this way the Day report represented the convergence of several different discourses on the study of Islamic art that had been circulating continuously around Boston throughout the first half of the twentieth century, resurfacing and reemerging at different moments, depending on particular circumstances.

CONCLUSION

During the first half of the twentieth century, the study of Islamic art in Boston moved through a succession of phases. In the first two decades, when the MFA was the most important center of activity, the influence of the Aesthetic Movement encouraged the de-contextualized and de-historicized viewing of art objects. Amateurs driven by a connoisseurial interest in beauty and the pursuit of social status began to form and display collections of Islamic art.

It must be pointed out that the early Islamic period, especially the first three hundred years up to about 900 AD, is the most important, because it was then that artistic traditions and criteria were established, and thus it is essential to everything else that follows...But the period after 1500 AD is to all intents the modern period, so its material is simply summarized in groups—for it would be an expense of spirit to list it one by one...113

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During this period, the study of Islamic art remained a field dominated by figures from Europe and America. The one scholar from the Middle East who was active at this time, Mehmet Aga-Oglu, was marginalized within the discipline. Between the different figures who did play a role in shaping the subject and the outlooks they represented, the study of Islamic art was pulled in different directions, influenced by a variety of factors, some international, others unique to the United States and the social and political life of the East Coast. The legacy of this period can still be felt strongly in the field today.

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NOTES

Author's note: This article grew out of a master's thesis at Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, supervised by Professor David J. Roxburgh, which in turn grew out of a seminar paper supervised by Professor Nasser Rabbat at MIT. I am very grateful to them and to Professor Gülru Necipoğlu for their comments on drafts of this article. I would also like to express my gratitude to Susan von Salis, Curator of Archives at Harvard Art Museums, who sadly passed away in 2012. I thank as well her assistants, Jane Callahan and Erin Mackin, as well as Laura Weinstein, for their help with archival research.
3. In her capacity as a ceramics specialist, Day had reviewed the chapters on ceramics in Arthur Upham Pope and Phyllis Ackerman, eds., *A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, 6 vols. (London, 1938). She also had some publications on textiles and had been at the center of a controversial debate over the dating of a collection of Buyid silks, some of which she had correctly exposed as forgeries. See Florence E. Day, untitled review of *Soieries Persanes* by Gaston Wiet, *Ars Islamica* 15–16 (1951): 231–44. For a later overview of the whole debate, see Sheila S. Blair, Jonathan M. Bloom, and Anne E. Wardwell, “Reevaluating the Date of the ‘Buyid’ Silks by Epigraphic and Radiocarbon Analysis,” *Ars Orientalis* 22 (1992): 1–41. Mehmet Aga-Ogлу is discussed in greater detail later in this article.


12. For a brief obituary of Mehmet Aga-Ogлу, see Maurice Dimand, “Mehmet Aga-Ogłu,” *College Art Journal* 9, 2 (Winter 1949–50): 208–9. For his full biography, see Semavi Eyice, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul, 1988– ), s.v. “Mehmet Ağaoğlu,” esp. 466. In 1938, Richard Ettinghausen, who had previously taught at New York University, took over this position and the editing of *Ars Islamica*. After a successful business career, Freer devoted his life and fortune to collecting art—at first American and European, but ultimately focusing on Japan, Korea, and China. In 1920, he gave a $50,000 gift of stock to the University of Michigan to promote the study of “Oriental art.” It is not clear how or why this broadly defined endowment was eventually allocated to a specific endeavor to support the study of Islamic art.


16. For an intellectual and cultural biography of Ross, see Marie Ann Frank, *Denman Ross and American Design Theory* (Hanover, N.H., 2011).

17. When travelling in India he noted that he was “doing this Mohammedan part of India rather rapidly, because it does not interest us so very much. The buildings and the sculpture are too late to be good. Even the Taj Mahal leaves me cold and unmoved. It is the India of Buddhism and of Brahmanism that really interests me.” Later he had a similarly underwhelmed response in Morocco; although the country was “intensely interesting,” he complained that there were “very few important buildings, buildings that count as works of art.” See Denman Ross to Isabella Stewart Gardner, February 11, 1913, and April 6, 1921. Smithsonian Institution, Archives of American Art, Isabella Stewart Gardner Papers, 1760–1956.


19. Its acquisition also depended on the brokering of Rudolf Riefstahl, a scholar/dealer based in Europe. Victor Goloubew, Russian by birth, was a scholar and collector based in Paris. His collection, one of the most extensive at that time, had been on display for several years at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. He sold these works to the MFA in order to start collecting Chinese art. See the *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 13, 74 (February 1915). For details of the background to its acquisition, see Erin Bauer, “The Goloubew Collection: A Transatlantic History” (PhD qualifying paper, Department of History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University, 2005). For further details on the collection, see Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Les miniatures orientales de la collection Goloubew au Museum of Fine Arts de Boston* (Paris, 1929).

20. For a brief summary of Wetzel’s life, see *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 16, 93 (February 1918): 88. For information on the half of his collection that he donated to the Fogg, see “Gems of Eastern Art Reach Harvard,” *Boston Daily Globe*, November 2, 1919. His collection was diverse, and included Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Persian art.

21. For information specifically about Gardner’s engagement with Asian art and her travels in China, Japan, Southeast Asia, India, and the Middle East, see Alan Chong, ed., *Journeys East: Isabella Stewart Gardner and Asia* (Boston, 2009).

22. See *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 1, 1 (March 1903): 8; and *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 13, 45 (June 1910): 23. The role of dealers in the formation of these collections is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is certainly a subject that deserves further research. For more information about Kelekian and his relationship with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, see Jenkins-Madina, “Collecting the ‘Orient,’” 73–76, and Simpson, “‘A Gallant Era.’"


29. *Annual Report of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (1911): 123. Unfortunately the content of this course could not be found.


33. The umbrella term “Islamic” has proved hard to shake and continues to be used as a framing device for the discipline, particularly in surveys of the field (though with declining frequency). It also continues to be used as a framing device for exhibition programming; see Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, *Cosmophilia: Islamic Art from the David Collection, Copenhagen* (Chestnut Hill, Mass., and Chicago, 2006).


37. Called “Gems of Eastern Art.”


39. The Arts and Crafts Movement emerged in Britain and lasted from roughly 1860 to 1910. Led by the artist William Morris, it was a reaction against the effects of industrialization and promoted the practice of traditional craftsmanship using simple forms and a return to medieval and folk styles of decoration.


For more discussion of Berenson’s influence on early scholarship on Islamic art, see G.A. Bailey, “Bernard Berenson and Islamic Painting at Villa I Tatti: Turkman, Uzbek, and Safavid Miniatures,” 16.


See Soucek, “Walter Pater, Bernard Berenson.” The interest in Persian art was also related to the Art Nouveau Movement (ca. 1890–1910), which inspired a growing interest in non-Western art and encouraged appreciation of a wider range of arts, including textiles, furniture, glassware, book design, and jewelry. Iranian glassware in particular was a source of inspiration for Art Nouveau artists. See Vernoit, “Islamic Art and Architecture: An Overview,” 29.

The archetypal example of this is Frederic Church and the art collection that he built up at his home, Olana. See Edwards, Noble Dreams, 30.


Quoted in Whitehill, Museum of Fine Arts, 212–13. Prichard was actually writing about a slightly earlier period in the museum’s history, the 1890s. However, there is no reason to believe that these aspects of museum life should not have continued into the early twentieth century.


See Whitehill, Museum of Fine Arts, 240. This was part of a broader trend at the museum away from classification by medium toward arranging materials by region and period.

Coomaraswamy brought with him to the MFA his collection of Rajput and Jain paintings and small Indian bronzes. For a biography of Coomaraswamy, along with a select bibliography and the reproduction of some of his essays, see Roger Lipsey, ed., Coomaraswamy, Bollingen Series, 3 vols. (Princeton, N.J., 1977).

The one significant venture of this period was the excavation of Rayy undertaken by the MFA together with the Iranian government and the University of Pennsylvania. However, the MFA withdrew in 1937 after it became clear that most of the finds were of archaeological rather than artistic interest. See Whitehill, Museum of Fine Arts, 530.

After Coomaraswamy died in 1947, there was no Islamic art curator until Milo Cleveland Beach arrived in 1964.

Exhibition Records (HC 6), file 201. Harvard Art Museums Archives, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.


See Rizvi, “Art History and the Nation.”


See n. 62 above.

See Finbarr Barry Flood, “From the Prophet to Postmodernism? New World Orders and the End of Islamic Art,” in Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and Its Institutions, ed. Elizabeth C. Mansfield (New York, 2007), 31–39. This idea has been very influential in the field and remains so to this day. In a recent appraisal of the field, Blair and Bloom, “Mirage of Islamic Art,” 175, assert that twentieth-century art from the Islamic world should best be left to scholars of the contemporary arts, since it is altogether different from the true artistic traditions of the Islamic world. Although these remarks were meant as a corrective to the idea of the “unchanging East,” such notions actually perpetuate the enforced dichotomy between an Islamic, “pre-modern” tradition and art produced under the era of Western-induced modernity. There is no reason why such subjects should not be of interest to both scholars of classical Islamic art and those of contemporary art.

For a standard example of the disparaging way in which such art has been viewed, see Basil Robinson, “Persian Painting under the Zand and Qajar Dynasties,” in The Cam-


68. Letter from Edward Waldo Forbes to Howland Shaw, April 29, 1932. Edward Waldo Forbes Papers (HC 2), file 16. Harvard Art Museums Archives, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. It is not clear who the other “camouflaged dealer” was to whom Forbes refers. However, it is worth noting that many scholars at that time were also dealers, notably Arthur Upham Pope and Rudolf Rießstahl.


70. Letter from Joseph Upton to Edward Waldo Forbes, May 16, 1932. Edward Waldo Forbes Papers (HC 2), file 16. Harvard Art Museums Archives, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Concern over the influence of scholars from the Islamic world persists even now, though in a slightly different form. Today, rather than being informed by a fear of nationalist sentiment, the concern is often voiced that scholars from the Islamic world may be driven by a search for identity rather than an “objective” scholarly interest. See Blair and Bloom, “Mirage of Islamic Art,” 176.

71. Ibid. As Upton explained in his letter: “I do feel very strongly, Mr Forbes, on the matter of American museums hiring Europeans for their staff. I am not one to try to always make the American eagle scream...but I do believe that there is no reason why, with patience and opportunity, we cannot develop American archaeologists and museum curators every bit as capable as those in Europe.”


73. Letters from Mehmet Aga-Oglu to Paul Sachs, October 11, 1937, and January 18, 1938. Paul J. Sachs Papers (HC 3), file 17. Harvard Art Museums Archives, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. It is not clear from these letters whether Aga-Oglu was just searching for a home for the journal *Ars Islamica* or was also looking for a teaching position for himself.

74. For an account of Schroeder, memories of his contributions to life at Harvard, and his full bibliography, see the tribute to him by Stuart Cary Welch, “Eric Schroeder” [obituary], in *Acquisitions (Fogg Art Museum)* 1969/1970, 9–30.

75. Pope and Ackerman, *Survey of Persian Art*.

76. Letter from Edward Waldo Forbes to Eric Schroeder, March 26, 1938. Edward Waldo Forbes Papers (HC 2), file 1898. Harvard Art Museums Archives, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. As Forbes explained in his letter, on account of the temporary absence of Langdon Warner (a specialist in Chinese and Japanese art), the Fogg had $500 to spare with which they could employ Schroeder on a part-time basis. Initially he was only employed for a year, with no guarantee of renewal after that. For the catalogue, see Eric Schroeder, *Persian Miniatures in the Fogg Museum of Art* (Cambridge, Mass., 1942). Schroeder remained at the Fogg until his death in 1973. Although he organized many exhibitions during his time at Harvard, he did not engage in any teaching. In his letter offering him work, Forbes explained to Schroeder that: “[w]e are unable just now to invite you to give a course at Harvard but it will be perfectly possible we are sure to arrange to have you give a small course of 3 or 4 or 6 public lectures on Persian art. The decision to invite you to give this course of public lectures rather than a regular university course is the result of a difficult situation which involves various people and in no way is a reflection on your capacity to give such a course.” Stuart Cary Welch believed that Schroeder was barred from teaching because there were concerns about his pro-German sentiment (telephone interview, December 2, 2006). See also Welch, “Private Collectors and Islamic Arts of the Book,” 29. Schroeder’s private papers contain outlines for courses he taught on Persian painting, so it is quite possible that he did some teaching privately.


82. See n. 79 above.


85. Ibid.

86. Ibid.

98. Ettinghausen, "Character of Islamic Art," 260. Ettinghausen concluded his analysis by observing that "Islamic art usually consists of a humble base; this is often covered with some sparkling or evanescent surface decoration which purports to be of precious material and presents forms divested of corporeal substance."
99. Some of these areas, particularly the teaching of languages, were already covered by the Department of Semitic Languages and History. See ibid., 5–6.
101. Letter from Hamilton A. R. Gibb to John Coolidge, October 3, 1957. John Coolidge and Agnes Mongan Papers (HC 5), file 925. Harvard Art Museums Archives, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. The long-term influence of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies upon the study of Islamic art is beyond the scope of this article. However, we should not doubt that it had a strong impact upon the field, particularly by bringing the study of Islamic art and architecture much closer to the field of area studies: see Grabar, "Islamic Art and Archaeology." It almost certainly also had an important formative influence upon many future scholars of Islamic art who earned their doctorates at Harvard and who probably took courses at CMES during their graduate studies. Indeed, Oleg Grabar, who taught at Harvard from 1969 to 1999, encouraged his students to take courses at the Center before embarking on their doctoral research (telephone interview, December 5, 2006).
104. Ibid.
105. The display was nonetheless problematic in other ways. Even though some of the older conceptions about Islamic art may have been shed, the objects in the show were basically being deployed to demonstrate political narratives. The entire exhibition was organized to celebrate the emergence of the modern nation-state of Turkey from the Ottoman Empire. A rigid distinction between the premodern Islamic empire and the modern Turkish nation-state was articulated through the layout of the exhibition, where, as the press release described, "One section...will be devoted to the Islamic background of the Turkish empire; another will deal with modern Turkey and the influence of the West." The connections with contemporary politics can be seen even more clearly in the involvement of officials from the Turkish consulate, who were requested to provide material to cover the "modern" part of the display. As McMullan wrote to the education attaché at the Turkish consulate in New York, "The University has excellent resources for the first and second areas [covering the Seljuk and Ottoman periods], but is happy indeed to rely upon your office and the Turkish information office in NY for material which applies specifically to the remarkable results which have been achieved by modern Turkey": Letter from Joseph McMullan to Ermin Hemingil, October 30, 1953. Registrar's Exhibition Files, file: 1954 Exhibition: The Turks in History, February 1st–March 15th. Harvard Art Museums Archives, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. The Fogg itself did not actually have much Seljuk or...
Ottoman material; for this exhibition it had been borrowed from the Peabody Museum, the MFA, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.


108. For a discussion of these issues and the strains it has placed on the discipline, see Flood, “From the Prophet to Postmodernism?” 42–44. One of the resulting problems has been a tendency to see Islamic art as a potential “bridge” between two hopelessly divided civilizations. This viewpoint, which has been especially pronounced since the events of September 11, 2001, has promoted the idea that through Islamic art one can discover the “true,” peaceful spirit of Islam, which can be used as a foundation for building better mutual understanding amid current political conflict. See Fayeq S. Oweis, “Islamic Art as an Educational Tool about the Teaching of Islam,” Art Education 55, 2 (March 2002): 18–24.


110. Letter from John Coolidge to Edward Warburg, May 27, 1957. John Coolidge and Agnes Mongan Papers (HC 5), file 924. Harvard Art Museums Archives, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. The Semitic Museum opened in 1903, courtesy of a gift from Jacob Schiff, “to Promote the Sound Knowledge of Semitic History and Literature.” Its sizable collections included ancient Near Eastern and early Islamic objects, and a collection of Arabic, Syriac, and Greek papyri manuscripts. The collections were curated first by Henry Lyon and then by Robert Pfeiffer. By the early 1950s, the museum was suffering financially because the original endowment had run out after the end of World War I. Although there were still endowments attached to the museum, there was no funding available to pay for the basic maintenance of the building. By the late 1950s it had declined even further; in 1957, it was reckoned that the museum had “virtually no impact of any sort. It is not only useless, it is worse than useless, for its continued existence creates a deficit. Meeting this is a drain every year on Harvard’s educational resources.” “The Problem of the Semitic Museum,” July 24, 1957. John Coolidge and Agnes Mongan Papers (HC 5), file 924. Harvard Art Museums Archives, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. In 1958, the Semitic Museum was converted into the Harvard Center for International Affairs, under the leadership of Henry Kissinger. It remained so until 1974, when it became the headquarters of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. I am grateful to Joseph Greene, assistant director of the Semitic Museum, for this information about the museum’s history.


113. See n. 5 above.

114. It ought to be noted that by this time Eric Schroeder was fading into the background at Harvard. In 1955, Coolidge approached him about putting together a series of lectures on Islamic art, but he turned down the offer saying that he wanted to concentrate on new areas of research. Coolidge was shocked and disappointed, and could not understand why he did not want to take up such an opportunity. It seems that Schroeder had gradually moved away from his interest in Islamic art and withdrawn into his own work on astrology. Letter from John Coolidge to Joseph McMullan, May 5, 1955. Letter from Joseph McMullan to Nathan Pusey, March 5, 1956. John Coolidge and Agnes Mongan Papers (HC 5), file 1643. Harvard Art Museums Archives, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

115. More recently, there has been renewed debate regarding what exactly the field should and should not encompass. Indeed, this has become one of the most actively discussed aspects of the discipline and has been a critical issue in recent appraisals of the state of the field. See Flood, “From the Prophet to Postmodernism?” 31–34.

116. It is important to note that the challenges Aga-Oglu made to some of the prevailing ideas about Islamic art also went unheeded: see Aga-Oglu, “Remarks on the Character of Islamic Art.”
An earlier version of this article was the winner of the 2011 Margaret B. Ševčenko Prize, awarded by the Historians of Islamic Art Association.

Ugo Monneret de Villard was born in Milan in 1881 (fig. 1). His bibliography comprises more than 270 works, including about twenty books and many long essays, on a wide variety of subjects relating to art, architecture, archaeology, and history, focused mainly on the medieval “Orient” and its relations with the “West.”¹ This great breadth is all the more astonishing when one considers the number of recent commentaries that mention Monneret’s writings as a crucial point of reference on this or that topic.² Notably, his studies on Islamic art, such as the posthumous Introduzione allo studio dell’archeologia islamica,³ are acknowledged as fundamental pillars for further consideration of the subject.⁴ His book on the painted ceilings of the Cappella Palatina,⁵ now more than sixty years old, remains essential for its multidisciplinary approach to the monument. In addition to this magnum opus, published a few years before Monneret’s death and today possibly his best-known work, in 1938 he dedicated another short but outstanding monograph to an Islamic artifact preserved in Italy—La cassetta incrostata della Cappella Palatina di Palermo. Apart from these last two texts, written more than two decades apart, only a few other short pieces by him deal with various Islamic art objects in Italy.⁶ Nonetheless, throughout his career, Monneret de Villard was tireless in his efforts to record and promote the subject of Islamic art in Italy.

Furthermore, one should not forget the catalogue “Opere di arte islamica in Italia,” to which Monneret devoted himself systematically in 1954,⁷ during the last months of his life. Although his friend Giorgio Levi della Vida called it the most important of the scholar’s unpublished works,⁸ it never appeared in print and today remains almost completely unknown, preserved among the thousands of documents and notes that comprise Monneret’s archives.⁹
Monneret systematically registered each “Islamic” artifact he encountered in a museum, church treasury, or other collection, sometimes completing the record with bibliographical references, sometimes just noting it down more briefly (fig. 2). The notes were therefore conceived as a working tool, collected over many years. This painstaking method reflects Monneret’s typical way of working, as is evident in all the materials preserved in Monneret’s archives.

An interest in Islamic art was quite an eccentric choice for an Italian scholar in the first half of the twentieth century. Again in the catalogue’s foreword, Monneret points out how art historians in Italy studied classical and Renaissance art almost exclusively, notwithstanding the long history of exchanges with the Middle East and the tradition of collecting Islamic and
“Oriental” artifacts during the Middle Ages and even later by important art patrons. Paradoxically, since the end of the nineteenth century, it had been mostly foreign scholars who were interested in the study of Islamic monuments and objects preserved in Italy.11

How and when did Monneret become drawn to the subject of Islamic art in Italy? Those who first briefly described the catalogue asserted that it would be difficult to detail all the steps involved in the making of “Opere di arte islamica in Italia,” or to establish when the idea for this work was first conceived.12

It is possible to trace a coherent trajectory through the scholar’s career and bibliographical output in order to discern how he responded to the historical and cultural contexts of the time.13 Beneath the multiplicity of issues treated in Monneret’s large number of apparently unrelated writings, one can extrapolate his gradual encounter with the “Oriente,” which progressively focused on the medieval Islamic world.

THE HUMANIST-ENGINEER AND THE “ORIENTE”

Monneret graduated from the Politecnico in Milan as a chemical industrial engineer in 1904.14 He was trained among engineers and architects belonging to the Milanese high-bourgeoisie, who were guided by a belief in productivity and scientific progress current at the time that was nonetheless destined to weaken with the impending crisis of positivism. Despite having chosen a technical education, his fondness for art and history dates from the same period. He was notably a student of the neomedievalist architect Camillo Boito, who was most likely responsible for Monneret’s enthusiasm for the Middle Ages.15 The young engineer was at first concerned with aesthetics and contemporary architecture. His interests ranged from individual monuments to town planning, and he soon became concerned with issues related to the coexistence of modern structures with ancient monuments. Monneret became increasingly aware of the importance of topography, local history, and archaeology as fundamental research tools,16 while his systematic working method reflected his training as an engineer. Fascinated by the theories that had only recently been put forth by Josef Strzygowski about the Eastern origin of early medieval architecture, Monneret compared the Church of San Lorenzo in Milan with the monuments of Eastern Christianity, and started to theorize that this and other Lombard monuments found their archetypes in the “Orient.”17 Strzygowski’s writings—especially the famous Orient oder Rom18—were regarded as a positive and significant model, in contrast to Giovan Battista Rivoira and Gustavo Giovannoni’s nationalistic idea of an exclusively Roman origin for Italian medieval architecture.19

Traveling to Dalmatia and Greece, Monneret deepened his historical knowledge of ancient and Byzantine art.20 It is not known exactly when Monneret became involved in Oriental archaeology,21 but his interests turned eastward early on, as is demonstrated by his publications. Monneret was also part of a circle associated with the Biblioteca Ambrosiana,22 whose prestigious tradition of Arabic studies may have stimulated the young man’s curiosity. In a long letter addressed to his friend Alessandro Casati23 in 1906, he wrote:

...E l’Egitto? E le Piramidi? (che domande a Borghese!) E le principesse sepolte? Grazie delle fotografie che mi prometti: te ne sarei tanto e tanto riconoscente perché qui è terribilmente difficile procurarsi fotografie di cose egiziane. E queste tanto e tanto mi interessano.

It was thus an early and genuine interest, which did not altogether exclude the exotic allure of the “Oriente.”

His interest in medieval architecture, combined with a special aptitude for collecting and interpreting data and archaeological materials, led Monneret de Villard to establish, in 1913, the first course on medieval archaeology in Italy.25 He spent several years teaching at the Politecnico and improving his archaeological method through local field studies,26 but the call of the Orient did not subside.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MISSIONS IN AFRICA AND THE “DISCOVERY” OF ISLAMIC ART

Monneret de Villard’s work in Africa is quite well documented.27 In 1921, he was invited by the Ufficio delle Missioni Scientifiche in Levante (a special section of the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to undertake an archaeological mission for the study of Christian medieval monuments in Egypt, “so that Italian science would be represented in the fervent rebirth of archaeological
On the other hand, the missions to Egypt—a country that played a major role in the collective imagination of colonial Europe—represented a great opportunity for growth: spending months in Cairo every year meant living immersed “in the fervent rebirth of archaeological studies developing in the Nile Valley,” at the heart of international exchanges with scholars and Orientalists from all over the (Western) world. In a short time, Monneret became highly regarded by such specialists, his work recognized by local and foreign institutions.

While Monneret had dedicated his first missions to Coptic monuments, once in Egypt the encounter with Islamic art and architecture was unavoidable and striking:

Fig. 3. Ugo Monneret de Villard (seated) with a group of workers at Deir Anba Sim’an (in Aswan), ca. 1924. Istituto Nazionale di Storia dell’Arte (INASA), Fondo Ugo Monneret de Villard, inv. no. 65489. (Photo: courtesy of INASA)
Monneret could not help but be attracted by medieval Islamic artistic production, which he considered to be firmly linked to contemporaneous Christian production. Continual mutual exchanges throughout the centuries made it impossible to study them separately. This conception, which strictly connected art and history, was also reflected in his rigorous practical approach:

Bisogna ricordare che l’Oriente è paese dalle molte vite e dalle molte storie, e che in ogni località si sovrappongono strati di diverse civiltà; che l’archeologo deve scavarli tutti e studiarli con eguale amore e con eguale scienza....

Archaeological investigation could not overlook any sources or evidence, and excavations should examine every layer with equal attention. Monneret’s comprehensive approach was once more asserted.

Thus, during his missions in Egypt, Monneret discovered Islamic architecture and became more experienced with archaeological surveys and excavations; he also acquired a good familiarity with the Arabic language, as well as with the almost unknown Islamic artifacts exhibited in newly established museums. He thus achieved a particular awareness of Islamic artistic production, knowledge that was further enriched by his archaeological missions in Nubia, Iran, and eastern Africa.

The extraordinary wealth of knowledge that he acquired became a precious treasure from which Monneret would benefit for years to come once he returned to Italy. Just as his scientific training influenced his research methodology and his archeological approach, in the field he learned to give material considerations and physical objects a special attention that would become a fundamental aspect of his further studies. On the other hand, his broad knowledge of the history and culture of the “Oriente” would be the basis of the many essays and works that Monneret completed in his later years.

**MONUMENTI DELL’ARTE MUSULMANA IN ITALIA: UMBERTO ZANOTTI BIANCO AND THE PROMOTION OF ISLAMIC ART IN ITALY**

Monneret was the only Italian specialist in Islamic art of his day. In 1938, almost contemporaneously with his last mission to Ethiopia, he published the small book (mentioned above) on the beautiful encrusted casket preserved in the Cappella Palatina in Palermo. This was printed under the patronage of Umberto Zanotti Bianco. When examining Zanotti Bianco’s archives in Rome, I uncovered a number of letters written by Monneret and other related documents, which revealed that the interest in Islamic art in Italy was shared by a group of distinguished intellectuals who articulated this sensibility through the twin goals of promoting the discipline at an academic level and encouraging the study of connections between the Italian heritage and Islamic artistic production.

Umberto Zanotti Bianco was born in Crete in 1889 to a family of Italian diplomats; he grew up near Turin, the rich capital of the recently formed Italian Reign. His family belonged to aristocratic circles. In 1909, he travelled to Sicily to bring aid in the aftermath of a dreadful earthquake that had struck southern Italy. The young man decided to devote himself entirely to ameliorating the shocking conditions he discovered there. In 1910, he was one of the founders of the Associazione Nazionale per gli Interessi del Mezzogiorno d’Italia (ANIMI). Zanotti Bianco’s philanthropic awareness of the Mezzogiorno (i.e., southern Italy) gradually extended to other concerns for the region: thanks to the archaeologist Paolo Orsi—who was particularly interested in prehistoric and Byzantine Calabria and Sicily—Zanotti Bianco paid special attention to the exceptionally rich, but almost completely neglected and thus seriously endangered, cultural heritage of the Mezzogiorno (fig. 4).

Historic and artistic treasures began to be protected through archaeological inquiries and the restoration of monuments. These activities also had a practical dimension: Zanotti Bianco was well aware of the importance of drawing attention to such treasures in order to help the future development of southern Italy.

In 1920, Orsi and Zanotti founded the Società Magna Grecia, to which a special section named the Sezione...
Mussolini’s authority and lend legitimacy to his imperial ambitions. The studies promoted by Zanotti and Orsi, on the other hand, emphasized how Italian history was the result of the passage and blending of different civilizations throughout the centuries and thus threatened the myth of an eternal and fixed Romanitas.47 The history of southern Italy included traces of such contacts with the Islamic world, but in the first decades of the twentieth century official scholars and academics in Italy had neglected this aspect of the country’s past. With Italian scholars so focused on Romanitas, it is not surprising that the necessity of promoting Islamic art in Italy was articulated in 1934 by a German, Friedrich Sarre; it is even less of a coincidence that his article “L’arte mussulmana nel Sud d’Italia e in Sicilia”48 was published in the Archivio Storico per la Calabria e per la Lucania, the magazine Zanotti and Orsi edited for the ANIMI.49 Sarre highlighted the Islamic legacy inherent

Bizantina Medievale was added in 1932.45 During the Fascist era, Zanotti Bianco’s initiatives came to be seen as a political challenge to the lack of attention that the government gave the “Questione del Mezzogiorno.” His efforts to deal with the crisis of southern Italy were seen as open opposition to the government, and were less tolerated day by day. In 1934, the Società Magna Grecia was dissolved by imperial decree. Zanotti Bianco was branded as anti-Fascist and extensively monitored and persecuted by the police; in 1941, he was even arrested.46 Evidently, Zanotti Bianco’s cultural interests were perceived as embodying an alternative to the studies proposed by scholars and academics representing the scienza ufficiale—the “official knowledge”—which too often forced the approach to different disciplines with propagandistic purposes. In the field of history and archaeology, scholars who supported the Fascists highlighted the Roman origins of Italy in order to strengthen
to the artistic heritage not only of Sicily, but also of Calabria and Apulia, stressing the importance of a better knowledge of these almost unknown treasures. To make this goal concrete, Sarre also stated that the study of Islamic art had to be included in the Italian academic system. His paper was accompanied by an extended note signed by Paolo Orsi, who emphasized the need to expand archaeological research in southern Italy and to create a chair of Islamic art, possibly in Rome.50

As this issue was especially dear to Zanotti Bianco, he wanted to make important Orientalists aware of his concern. In particular, he sent a copy of Sarre’s article to Giorgio Levi Della Vida,51 who replied on March 10, 1934.52 The scholar expressed his full approval of the proposal to create a university chair, but stated that he was not in a position to support it:

Quanto ad appoggiare la proposta, Lei sa bene che non sono in condizione di appoggiare che che sia…Certo è cosa triste che da noi gli studi di arte islamica siano così poco coltivati, e una cattedra apposita (che giustamente l’Orsi vorrebbe istituita a Roma) sarebbe utilissima.53

In 1931, Levi Della Vida had in fact refused to pronounce the Fascist oath, which had been imposed on all academics, and had therefore lost his post, together with his leverage in the academic environment.54

On March 7, 1934, a short article by the Arabist Giuseppe Gabrieli55 appeared in the pages of the daily Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno: “Per la istituzione di una cattedra di storia dell’arte islamica in Italia” included a short review of Sarre’s paper. Although he focused on Apulia in discussing the question of southern Italy’s interactions with the Islamic world, Gabrieli joined the ranks of those demanding the creation of a professorship of Islamic art, underlining the crucial role it would play in the study and gathering of data on this topic.56

A copy of the article survives in a file with other press clippings carefully gathered by Zanotti Bianco,57 which may suggest that there was direct contact between the two intellectuals. Did Zanotti Bianco send Sarre’s article to Gabrieli? He may have even commissioned Gabrieli to write the piece in the Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno. While such questions may never be answered, it is clear that many eminent scholars were involved in this attempt to promote the study of Islamic art in Italy.

Zanotti Bianco had indeed sent Sarre’s article to Monneret de Villard,58 who found it in his house in Milan on his return from an archaeological mission in Nubia.59 The article inspired Monneret: in a letter dated July 2, 1934, he enthusiastically declared that he had been concerned with the matter of Islamic art in Italy for some years, but that unfortunately he had had to put this work aside, due to his busy archaeological activity abroad:60

Ho riguardato il mio materiale: v’è molto, ma molto più v’è da fare, moltissimo anzi. Ma riguardando le mie vecchie note e rileggendo l’articolo del Sarre e la nota dell’Orsi, mi è venuta un’idea che ora le propongo. Ella mi dirà francamente che ne pensa.61

Regarding the question of creating a chair of Islamic art, Monneret plainly stated his total mistrust of Italian institutions:

Pensare che il Governo faccia qualcosa è vano: al più prenderà un imbecille presuntuoso e facilone che avrà scribacchiato qualche articolo di compilazione e te lo “schiafferà” in una cattedra universitaria. Meglio niente: se si può fare qualcosa, ciò non può [sic] venire che da privati.62

In his opinion, the initiative would have to come from private citizens, and Monneret formulated his own plan to help realize Sarre’s proposals: Monneret’s ambitious but well planned project reflected his distinctive systematic and methodological approach. The first step would be to compile a card index with all known data on the subject. Another fundamental task would be to commission photographs of all the relevant objects and monuments. The work should start with what was easiest to access: museums, monuments, and possibly archaeological excavations. Many topics could come out of this first phase of the project: the focus would be on the groups of monuments (“le cassette d’avorio dipinte, gli olifanti, le stoffe…Poi ad esempio pubblicare integralmente e in ogni dettaglio il soffitto della Cappella Palatina, repertorio meraviglioso di tutti i motivi decorativi musulmani dell’Italia meridionale”63) that had similar problems, above all that of determining their provenance.64 Gradually, the results would be published in brief but rich monographs. Monneret planned to conduct wide-ranging research, rather than focusing on individual objects, as one could infer at first glance from his 1938 publication on the cassetta incrostata. The ultimate goal was the formation of a “corpus dei monu-
The involvement of foreign scholars was necessitated by the dearth of Italian specialists, but it also demonstrated the openness of the Italian protagonists who initiated this endeavor, as well as their lack of an overweening national pride.

However, Monneret de Villard remained the main academic collaborator. Once the mission to Nubia was completed at the beginning of 1936, he was then able to delve into the many questions that had arisen as he collected such a large quantity of data. Although his travels continued, he finally seemed able to give the study of Islamic art in Italy the attention it deserved.

He wrote from Milan:

Ho quindi deciso di riprendere i miei studi sull’arte musulmana nell’Italia meridionale e in Sicilia e di mettermi a capo fitto in questo mare magnum. Dal Cairo ho portato molto materiale di confronto che sarà utilissimo, ma prima di ogni cosa si tratta per me di raccogliere il materiale in Italia. La cosa la interessa ancora come la interessava un paio d’anni or sono? Nel quale caso è disposto ad aiutarmi? L’aiuto consisterebbe per ora nel procurarmi delle fotografie, informazioni, articoli sperduti in riviste introvabili a Milano e simile.

Monneret compiled a detailed list of the photographs and copies of plates that he had asked Zanotti to provide, mainly of ivory objects preserved in Italy and the painted ceilings of the Cappella Palatina. He clearly planned to work primarily on books and pictures, which is understandable, given the complex nature of his project: “Ella non può immaginare la massa di materiale musulmano d’Italia sparso nei musei di tutto il mondo: il che rende lo studio piuttosto difficile.”

In the meantime, Zanotti Bianco, acting on his own, contacted Giuseppe Agnello and Carlo Carucci to collect data on Sicilian ceramics and the Salerno ivories, respectively. Zanotti clearly wanted to involve numerous specialists in his project, and he kept Marguerite Van Berchem informed, possibly even sending her Sarre’s article.

J’ai lui ai parlé des monuments arabes de l’Italie méridionale et de la nécessité de s’en occuper. Cela l’a beaucoup intéressé... Je lui ai proposé que nous lui fussions parvenir quelques photos des monuments ou objets arabes de l’Italie méridionale... Il a été enchanté par cette idée.... Je crois que vous avez beaucoup plus d’espoir de pouvoir arriver à quelque chose avec lui qu’avec Sarre, qui est malade et trop âgé...
We cannot be certain as to why the project ceased, but it is likely that Zanotti Bianco’s delicate political situation and the lack of funds on the eve of World War II were among the main causes. Moreover, the catalogues by Perry Blythe Cott and José Ferrandis dedicated to the painted ivories (and published in the same years) probably discouraged Monneret from continuing his own work on the same topic. Even the study of the Cappella Palatina ceilings was temporarily sidelined.

By 1937 Monneret had moved from Milan to Rome. During the war his mobility was certainly limited; it was probably in these years that he worked on the *Introduzione allo studio dell’archeologia islamica*. The correspondence with Monneret preserved in Zanotti Bianco’s archives ceases at the end of 1938, and it is not by chance that the next letter dates to 1954, when Monneret dedicated himself to arranging the notes collected through-

In May 1937 the first book was ready:

Egregio amico, avrei terminato il primo fascicolo della serie di studi sui monumenti musulmani d’Italia, di cui abbiamo avuto altra volta occasione di trattare.... Tratta del cofanetto intarsiato della Cappella Palatina di Palermo. It did not include the ceilings or the painted ivory caskets, though Monneret promised that a second and a third volume dealing with painted and sculpted ivories would follow. The documents that followed concerned practical aspects, such as the choice of paper, format, copyrights, correction of drafts, and distribution.

In February 1938, *La cassetta incrostata della Cappella Palatina di Palermo* was published (fig. 5). It was supposed to be the first book in a new series entitled *Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia*, included in the broader *Collezione Meridionale*, directed by Zanotti Bianco. From Zanotti Bianco’s archives we learn that in May 1938 the first volume was ready:

Fig. 5. Title page and plate 1 of *Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia. I. La cassetta incrostata della Cappella Palatina di Palermo*, published with the support of Umberto Zanotti Bianco (Rome, 1938).
Carinino U. Zanotti Bianco

Ricevo la sua lettera del 15 al momento in quale si amichevole preparazioni a partire. Perché non dirci a casa quanto tempo sia passato da che abbiamo scritto l’ultima, e quanto tempo è trascorso da quando ci siamo sentiti in Italia. La tua storia è piuttosto interessante e parte per continuare i miei studi, e non sono di ritorno in Italia di nuovo in primavera. Abbiamo tempo l’uno e l’altro per pensare al problema. La sola cosa preoccupante è la parte più amministrativa, per il resto è questione di buona volontà. Si vede che non esiste un piano di lavoro in Italia. Le tue notizie mi interessano molto. Sono felice di essere in buona salute. Ti invito a inviare i tuoi studi. Ti prego di scrivere a me.

Sara a Roma certamente un ottobre a fine ottobre. Sembra che il clima sia buono e la casa è tranquilla.

 firme

Fig. 6. One of the letters written by Ugo Monneret de Villard to Umberto Zanotti Bianco. ANIMI, Archivio Storico, A.III.03. UA29, folder Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia. (Photo: courtesy of ANIMI)
out his life in order to publish the catalogue he referred to as “Opere di arte islamica in Italia.”93 The documents uncovered in Zanotti Bianco’s archives thus provide many answers to questions concerning the long genesis of this work, revealing how it was first conceived and articulated, how it was modified due to practical contingencies, and which monumenti first awoke Monneret’s curiosity. The collection of letters also confirms the scholar’s systematic method: his meticulous collection of data and materials, which originated from a positivist background, reveals Monneret’s conviction—perhaps illusory—that he was building an indispensable and infallible instrument for the further advancement of knowledge in this area. It also emerges that Monneret consistently used photographic images as an essential working tool.

Moreover, the close cooperation and friendship that bound Monneret and Zanotti, as well as Monneret’s criticisms of the scienza ufficiale, as revealed in letters (fig. 6), allow us to examine from a different perspective the scholar’s collaboration with Italian institutions during the Fascist era, particularly during the period Monneret spent in Africa on archaeological missions.94

Above all, the correspondence discloses a cultural milieu that has remained, until now, almost totally overlooked. Umberto Zanotti Bianco’s involvement as a “coordinator” reveals a civic engagement behind his cultural activism. This was not a solitary, exclusively erudite initiative but rather the brainchild of a group of outstanding intellectuals and scholars with varied interests and sensibilities, who shared a common goal, namely, promoting the study of Islamic art in Italy.


In the mid-1930s, the debate regarding the possible establishment of a chair of Islamic art remained confined to an exchange among members of a restricted elite. This attempt was renewed at an academic level about ten years later, just after the fall of Mussolini. In September and October 1944, Monneret led a course on “Archeologia cristiana” at the Università La Sapienza in Rome.95 On November 20, 1944, the Board of Lettere e Filosofia discussed the proposal, advanced by the Scuola Orientale96 and supported by the teachers of Storia dell’Arte,97 to found a chair of “Storia dell’arte dell’Oriente medioevale,” which would be assigned to Ugo Monneret de Villard.98 Monneret was supported mainly by Michelangelo Guidi99 and Pietro Toesca.100 Guidi stressed the “meriti altissimi del Monneret,” as well as his “rara preparazione scientifica,” “imponente attività di scavi,” “fama assai diffusa fuori d’Italia,” and “nobile e coraggioso passato politico,”101 while also emphasizing the...necessità di salvare per quanto è possibile le importanti posizioni già tenute dalla cultura italiana in Egitto e in tutto il vicino Oriente: si tratta di mantenere intatta una nobile e proficua tradizione. A questo fine nessuno forse potrebbe collaborare in modo efficace come il Monnaret [sic].102

At such a moment of rupture with Italy’s dramatic past, Monneret represented an uncontroversial opportunity for continuity, thanks also to his international scholarly reputation. Moreover, the name of the chair fitted perfectly with Monneret’s multifaceted conception of “Oriental art,” which in his view encompassed both Islamic and Christian art and the cross-cultural exchanges between the two.

Nevertheless, some colleagues expressed an unfavorable opinion: after the many abuses of authority that had occurred during the Fascist era, it was no longer acceptable to create new academic posts without a proper competition.103 The Board finally approved the creation of a new chair of “Storia dell’arte dell’Oriente medioevale,” which would be officially advertised and not necessarily assigned to Monneret de Villard. But the chair was never established.104 The first chair of Islamic art and archaeology would be instituted only in 1968, at the Istituto Universitario Orientale in Naples, where it would be assigned to Umberto Scerrato; only in 1975 was this chair shared with Rome.105

In the last ten years of his life, Monneret dedicated himself to the study of different subjects consistently related to the Middle Ages and the “Orient”: he published works aimed at a general public, as well as learned essays on both specialized and broad topics.106 This variety reflects once more Monneret’s complex conception of the “Orient,” and some notes in Monneret’s
Frail health prevented him from leaving Rome, so he provided the photographers with very meticulous instructions (fig. 7). The outcome was an astonishing ensemble of scientific photographs. The endeavor to collect such comprehensive visual material was a first and indispensable step in an exhaustive research project, which took all the historical data, primary sources, and preceding literature into consideration. Ettinghausen’s article clearly played a key role, and his “Fatimid Thesis,” about the probable origin of the painters of the Cappella Palatina ceilings, was acknowledged.

In 1950, Monneret finally published his renowned work Le pitture musulmane al soffitto della Cappella Palatina in Palermo, no less than sixteen years after the genesis of this idea. With its remarkable collection of 250 photographs, it was not the kind of book that could be financed by Italian institutions in the post-war period. The funds and resources required to realize such a huge photographic campaign came instead from the United States. Monneret’s correspondence includes clues as to what was happening behind the scenes of this great undertaking. The main player from the United States was Richard Ettinghausen, who, in a letter dated July 24, 1946, stated, “I was most interested in what you wrote me about the possibility of photographing the paintings on the ceilings of the Cappella Palatina.” In his 1942 essay “Painting in the Fatimid Period: A Reconstruction,” the scholar had reported on the scarcity of photographs of the painted ceilings, so he was excited by Monneret’s proposal. With the help of Charles Rufus Morey, the cultural attaché at the American Embassy in Rome, Ettinghausen managed to gather funds for the mission. Two major U.S. scholars, one of Islamic art, the other concerned with Christian art and medieval iconography, were thus actively supporting the project.

The photographs were taken by the Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale between July 1947 and May 1948, that is, just before the restoration undertaken by the Istituto centrale del restauro. It is likely that Monneret’s frail health prevented him from leaving Rome, so he provided the photographers with very meticulous instructions (fig. 7). The outcome was an astonishing ensemble of scientific photographs.

The endeavor to collect such comprehensive visual material was a first and indispensable step in an exhaustive research project, which took all the historical data, primary sources, and preceding literature into consideration. Ettinghausen’s article clearly played a key role, and his “Fatimid Thesis,” about the probable origin of the painters of the Cappella Palatina ceilings, was acknowledged.
most fully repeated. Monneret's manifold approach did not disregard the technical aspects of the ceiling's construction, stylistic considerations, or a thorough iconographic study; thus encompassing in a single work many of the issues that would be covered in further depth in future studies. This multi-disciplinarity ante litteram is not only the consequence of Monneret's mentality, but perhaps also represents an attempt to free art historical study from the heavy legacy of Benedetto Croce’s Estetica, in which the artwork was mainly considered as the outcome of an instantaneous intuitive action: during and after the Fascist era, many intellectuals had considered this philosopher their essential point of reference, and art historians had adopted a purely visual and formal approach, which tended to exclude all aspects and contexts beyond the work of art itself. Monneret’s Le pitture musulmane therefore represented a successful attempt to update the methodology, possibly also as a result of his contact with an international academic environment. The book received widespread recognition, especially in the United States, and in 1950 Monneret was awarded the prestigious Premio nazionale generale della Accademia dei Lincei, which probably represented the first important acknowledge-ment of his scholarship in Italy after so many years of hard work.

On January 1, 1954, Monneret signed a three-year contract with the Fondazione Caetani of the Accademia dei Lincei and the Istituto Nazionale di Storia dell’Arte—the time had come to organize all the precious materials and notes concerning Islamic artifacts in Italy that he had collected over more than two decades (fig. 8), in order to prepare the catalogue (or “raccolta di note personali”) Opere di arte islamica in Italia. A manuscript that included a “Prefazione” and about 400 files was completed, but there remained in Monneret’s archives an extraordinary number of notes, photographs, and typewritten and handwritten forms, scattered in different boxes but generally grouped according to topographic criteria.

Monneret de Villard died on November 4, 1954, before he had a chance to organize these materials. The Islamic art historian David Storm Rice was entrusted to carry on with this task, and many of his notes are in fact preserved in the same folders, if not in the same files. But the extent of the material was so overwhelming that when Rice died in 1962 he had not yet accomplished his goal. Umberto Scerrato finally took
Monneret’s journey ended far from where he started: the young engineer from Milan had gradually discovered the archaeology of the Middle Ages and the “Orient”; his fascination soon turned into a scholarly interest that brought him to Cairo, and into direct contact with the international community of Orientalists, as well as the Italian institutions that sponsored cultural propaganda. The archaeological missions he undertook in Africa allowed him to develop and establish a rigorous method of investigation that he applied almost obsessively, both to the structuring of projects and to the approach he used in analyzing individual artifacts and monuments. There the Italian archaeologist discovered Islamic artistic production; his important inquiries into medieval Islam were notable for their reliability, even in the eyes of foreign scholars. This combination of experiences enabled him to look at the unexplored Islamic monuments and artifacts of Italy from a new and enriched point of view.

Monneret’s scholarly background is a lens through which we can examine the historiography of Islamic art in Italy in the first half of the twentieth century, while the documents uncovered in Zanotti Bianco’s archives reveal Monneret’s interests and methodology. It also appears that an awareness of the Islamic artistic heritage of southern Italy arose in the 1930s among an intellectual élite that was removed from the scienza ufficiale. The idea of instituting a chair of Islamic art to give value and space of action to the discipline was generated in the same milieu. The different attempts to establish an academic post were, however, inhibited by a general indifference toward an artistic phenomenon that was less evident than others in Italian territory, and which was considered irrelevant to the enhancement of national identity. The study of the Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia began as a private initiative, far from the usual academic circles. If Zanotti Bianco was the ethical and civic core of this initiative, Monneret de Villard was the main scientific fulcrum. For him, the idea of cataloguing represented an indispensable first step toward real understanding. The approach to individual objects should not be read as merely revealing an antiquarian taste: the collection of all known data—including the pictures—was converted into a working tool to generate further conclusions. The work La cas-

Fig. 9. Ugo Monneret de Villard, passport photo, ca. 1950. (Photo: courtesy of Accademia dei Lincei)

advantage of that wealth of material, which became the starting point for his important contribution to the 1979 volume Gli Arabi in Italia, entitled “Arte islamica in Italia,” though he never acknowledged Monneret de Villard’s fundamental contribution to it. It was Giovanni Curatola who celebrated Monneret’s name and work, on the occasion of the 1993–94 exhibition L’eredità dell’Islam, held in Venice, which was conceived in continuity with the path opened by Monneret himself (fig. 9).

MONNERET DE VILLARD AND THE STUDY OF ISLAMIC ART IN ITALY

Monneret’s other important essays on Islamic art were published posthumously, and he would never know how well his research was received. Nonetheless, the quality and reach of his work remain an unsurpassed legacy for scholars of Islamic art today.
setta incrostata della Cappella Palatina di Palermo is a good example of this approach, where the focused study of the object became a pretext for considering a wide range of comparative examples, thus providing an exhaustive study on a more general topic, the encrustation technique. At the same time, the book was supposed to be just one component of a larger work. Likewise, the catalogue files of the “Opere di arte islamica” were conceived as single “bricks” of a bigger structure that had not yet been built: the history of Islamic art in Italy.

This was clear to Giorgio Levi Della Vida:

Sono più di 400 oggetti ... la descrizione dei quali fatta in maniera unitaria e sistematica rivelerà una ricchezza insospettata dai più di oggetti di arte islamica in Italia e gioverà in misura notevole al progresso dello studio di una disciplina purtroppo interamente trascurata tra noi, coll'eccezione, splendida si ma unica, di Monneret de Villard.141

The catalogue was just the beginning of an ambitious, almost titanic, effort, which had excellent but only partial outcomes. It deserves to be published even today, in light of both its enduring scholarly importance and the historical value it has acquired over the decades.

Monneret de Villard may thus be considered the father of Islamic art history in Italy: he was concerned with the Islamic artistic heritage in Italian territory, but he also became a wide-ranging specialist of the discipline, although he focused on the Middle Ages, overlooking periods today rightly considered part of the field. Through his approach, he viewed the development of “Oriental” art as a complex phenomenon, also in constant dialogue with “Western” art.” It was almost as if he were anticipating the current issue of defining the borders of Islamic art as an academic discipline. This idea was echoed in the title he would have liked for his course at La Sapienza, “Storia dell’arte dell’Oriente medioevale,” and clearly articulated when Giuseppe Tucci asked him to write about the “Arte del vicino Oriente.” Perhaps Monneret himself would have considered the label “master of Islamic art” reductive. Once more, it was his friend Levi Della Vida who best described Monneret’s conception of art:

...Una concezione organica dell'unità dello svolgimento dell'arte nell'Oriente, del suo costante rapporto collo svolgimento dell'arte dell'Occidente, della stretta interdipendenza tra storia dell'arte e storia generale. A metter in chiaro questa unità...Monneret de Villard ha contribuito quanto assai pochi dei suoi contemporanei.142

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APPENDIX

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF UGO MONNERET DE VILLARD (1881–1954)

Preliminary note


The updated bibliography includes 272 entries, a considerable number of which are monographs and books. The wealth and variety of topics are truly remarkable, reflecting Monneret’s wide range of interests. It is nonetheless possible to trace their development throughout the decades.

A fil rouge is particularly evident when browsing the scholar’s bibliography, namely, his gradual opening to the “Orient.” As seen in his correspondence with...
Alessandro Casati (see above, p. 37), in which the region is first regarded as an exotic land of “buried princesses,” a common thread manifests itself in occasional references to “Oriental” medieval architecture in some early articles dealing with apparently disparate subjects (for example, see nos. 53, 55, 64, and 78); it then emerges gradually as Monneret’s main interest, the many diverse aspects of which are to be studied using a multidisciplinary methodology and a more scientific approach.

This itinerary started with a precocious but quite generic interest in art and architecture: Monneret’s early writings were dedicated to modern and contemporary painting, and to contemporary architecture (see most of the titles in nos. 1–63). Broad topics, such as Benedetto Croce’s *Estetica* (nos. 14, 18, 40, 64, 69, and 114), the theory and history of architecture (nos. 53, 55, and 70), and town planning (nos. 46–49, 52, and 71) also intrigued the young engineer. Well aware of the importance of reconciling urban expansion with the preservation of monumental historical heritage, Monneret soon dedicated himself to topographic, archaeological, and historical studies. Western medieval architecture—especially Lombard—and its relationship with the “East” (from the Byzantine territories to Egypt, Persia, and India) captivated him as early as 1908, and remained the main focus of his interest from 1914 to 1924, when he taught a course entitled “Archeologia medievale” at the Politecnico in Milan (see most of the titles in nos. 72–128).

In the early 1920s, he began to travel abroad more frequently, and it was at this time that his writings dedicated exclusively to Oriental art and architecture first appeared (beginning with no. 129). Research missions afforded him the opportunity to investigate Eastern Christian art and improve his methodology; it also allowed him to discover Islamic art and architecture.

He regularly published works related to the research and archaeological surveys he conducted, as well as to excavations he led in Egypt (nos. 136–70, most titles), Nubia (nos. 171–85, 191), Eastern Africa (nos. 180, 186, 189, 190, and 196), and even Iran (nos. 183, 187, and 192–94). Monneret’s last archaeological missions abroad date to the late 1930s. The last fifteen years of his life were spent mostly in Rome, where he dedicated himself not only to the completion and publication of research he had carried out in previous decades (nos. 198–207, 210–16), but also to the systematic study of Islamic art in Italy (only a few such articles and papers were published: nos. 203, 208, and 225). He also wrote erudite essays dealing with the relationship between East and West during the Middle Ages (nos. 221, 222, 227, 230, 231, 240, 252, and 253), along with encyclopedia entries, most notably for the *Enciclopedia cattolica* (nos. 234, 235, 237, 238, 244, 245, 247–51, 254, 255, and 266), while also completing some other fundamental works that remain essential references for scholars today (nos. 241, 271, and 272).

**Abbreviations**

*ACIA*  
Atti del Collegio degli Ingegneri ed Architetti di Milano, Milan.

*Aegyptus*  
Aegyptus. Rivista Italiana di Egittologia e Papirologia, Milan.

*ASL*  
Archivio Storico Lombardo, Giornale della Società Storica Lombarda, Milan.

*Emporium*  
Emporium. Rivista mensile illustrata d’arte, letteratura, scienze e varietà, Bergamo.

*It. Mon.*  
L’Italia Monumentale. Collezione di Monografie sotto il patronato del Touring Club Italiano e della “Dante Alighieri.”

*Il Politecnico*  
Il Politecnico, Giornale dell’Ingegnere Architetto Civile ed Industriale, Milan.

*Il Rinnovamento*  
Il Rinnovamento, Rivista critica di idee e fatti, Milan.
La Perseveranza, Giornale del Mattino, Milan.


Orientalia Christiana Periodica, Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, Rome.

Oriente Moderno, Istituto per l’Oriente, Rome.

Orientalia, Commentarii Periodici Pontificii Instituti Biblici, nova series, Rome.

Atti della (Reale until s. VI) Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Rendiconti, cl. di scienze morali, Rome.

Reale Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere. Rendiconti, Milan.

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“Il Cattolicesimo Rosso,” *LP* (January 8, 1908).

“Del simbolismo architettonico,” *Il Rinnovamento* 2 (1908): 125–74. [Covers, in particular, medieval Christian and Islamic architecture.]


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"La forma architettonica e la materia," MT 22 (August 10, 1908): 433–35. [With reference to the architecture of Asia Minor, Achaemenid Persia, and Buddhist India.]


Opere di architettura moderna: Con note di Ugo Monneret de Villard (Milan, 1909). [Introduction and photo gravures of architectural works in Italy, Austria, France and Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, the United States, Hungary, Sweden, and Finland.]

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(100) “Studi sull’arte di costruire le città. Spalato,” *MT* 19 (1913): 428–30. [Includes comparisons with Ukhaydir, Mshatta, Palmyra, and Antioch, and references to Umayyad and Sassanid architecture.]


(103) “Note di Archeologia lombarda,” *ASL* 41 (1914): 5–70. [Summary: Chap. 1. Diocletian’s mausoleum in Split and its influence on Lombard architecture; Chap. 2. The origin of the planimetric form of San Lorenzo in Milan (includes comparisons with Ukhaydir, Mshatta, Palmyra, and Antioch, and references to Umayyad and Sassanid architecture.]


(106) *Catalogo delle iscrizioni cristiane anteriori al secolo XI* (Milan, 1915) (“Il Castello Sforzesco di Milano. Le sue raccolte storiche e artistiche.”) [Contains forty-eight entries concerning inscriptions from Milan (the ancient cemetery of Porta Vercelliana, the Cathedral neighborhood, and various sites), Lombardy, and unknown sites; bibliography and indices.]


(15) Gerusalemme e i luoghi Santi (Milan, 1918).


(19) “Il più antico documento relativo all’ospizio del S. Gottardo,” ASL 45 (1918): 578–79.


(25) “La monetazione nell’Italia Barbarica,” RINSA 34 (1921): 191–218 (pt. 3). [Summary: 1919: Coins of Lombard Italy until the end of the Carolingian Empire; the mancus coin and the circulation of Arab and Byzantine gold in Barbarian Europe; gold coinage in the German Empire; 1920: monetary legislation. I. Monetary law; 1921: Types and issues of coins under the Lombards and Charlemagne.]


(30) “Sull’origine della doppia cupola persiana,” Architettura e Arti Decorative 1 (1921): 315–24. [Includes comparisons with Indian and Chinese monuments.]


(36) A. Patricolo, La chiesa di Santa Barbara al Vecchio Cairo: Illustrata da A. Patricolo e da U. Monneret de Villard (Florence, 1922), in Italian and English.


(40) “Saggio di una bibliografia dell’arte cristiana in Egitto,” Bollettino del Reale Istituto di Archeologia e Storia dell’Arte, I (1922): 20–32. [Two parts: historical sources and archaeological studies.]

(41) La scultura ad Ahnas. Note sull’origine dell’arte copta (Milan, 1923).


“Arte manichea,” *RIL* 56 (1923): 971–84. [Covers architecture, painting, miniatures, and the art of the book.]


*Description générale du monastère de Saint Siméon à Aswân. Ouvrage hors commerce publié sous les auspices du Comité de conservation des monuments de l’art arabe* (Milan, 1928).


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*La necropoli musulmana di Aswan* (Cairo, 1930). (Publications du Musée Arabe du Caire.) [Avant­propos by Gaston Wiet, 7–8.]

“La missione per lo studio dei monumenti cristiani della Nubia e i suoi lavori del 1930–31,” *Aegyptus* 11 (1931): 544–15. [The article is not signed, but Monneret registered it as no. 65 in his own personal bibliography (manuscript).]


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(199) Le chiese della Mesopotamia, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 128 (Rome, 1940). [The churches of Ctesiphon, al-Hirah, and Tur Abdin; the monasteries of Tur Abdin; the expansion of Mesopotamic forms; late medieval churches.]


(204) “Le fortezze cristiane della Nubia,” in Miscellanea Gregoriana raccolta di scritti pubblicati nel I centenario della fondazione del Pont. Museo Egizio (1839–1939), Monumenti, musei e gallerie pontificie (Vatican City, 1941), 135–43.

(205) La Nubia Romana (Rome, 1941).


(208) “Un codice arabo-spagnolo con miniature,” La Bibliofilia 43 (1941): 209–23. [Illustration of Ms. Vat. Ar. 368.]


(210) “Il culto del Sole a Meroe,” RSE 11 (1942): 107–42. [Includes references to Persian Achaemenid monuments.]


(212) “La coronazione della Vergine in Abissinia,” RSE 3 (1943): 36–45 [Especially focused on the illustration of Ms. Or. 148, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence.]


(215) “La Majestas Domini in Abissinia,” RSE 3 (1943): 167–75. [With emphasis on the miniatures of Taamra Mairyam’s manuscript, completed in 1571, from Biblioteca Giovardiana in Veroli.]


(226) “La tessitura palermitana sotto i Normanni e i suoi rapporti con l’arte bizantina,” in Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati, Studi e Testi 123 (Vatican City, 1946): III, 464–89. [Summary: I. Historical documents; II. Graphic documents.]
“Antiochia e Milano nel VI secolo,” *OPC* 12 (1946): 374–80 [Importation of cultural elements and Oriental architectural forms, attesting to “stretti rapporti fra Antiochia e la valle del Po nei primi secoli dopo la pace della Chiesa” (tight relationships between Antioch and the Po Valley in the first centuries after the Peace of the Church [i.e., after the 313 Milan Edict]).]


“Mosè, vescovo di Adulis,” *OPC* 13 (1947): 613–23 (= *Miscellanea Guillaume de Jerphanion*). [Deals especially with cultural exchanges and the relationship with Christianity between the Red Sea and Indian regions, stretching to Ceylon and Socotra.]


*Il Libro della Peregrinazione nelle parti d’Oriente di Frate Ricoldo da Montecroce* (Rome, 1948). (Dissertationes Historicæ, fasc. XIII.) [Summary: his life; sources; medieval itineraries in Asia Minor; the journey to Tabriz; the Tatars and Buddhism; the Kurds; Baghdad; the Sabaeans; history and knowledge of the Koran; virtues of the Saracens.]


“Aksum e i quattro re del mondo,” *Annali Lateranensi* 12 (1948): 125–80. [Historical and cultural aspects of the four parts of the world, in particular: the spread of Manichaeism in Egypt and, from the center of Hirah, among the Arabs of the Syrian-Palestinian desert; the river Σίλις and the Kushana Kingdom; Buddhism in Central Asia, India, China, and related artistic cultures.]


*Enciclopedia cattolica* (Rome, 1948–54), s.v. “Akhmim” [Middle Egypt].


“Sul palazzo di Theodorico a Galeata,” in RANL 8, 7 (1952): 26–32. [Outlines, in particular, “che le rovine del palazzotto da caccia fattosi costruire da Teodorico a Galeata, che è un paesetto sulla via tra Forlì e Arezzo, ripetono identica la pianta caratteristica dei palazzotti della regione iranica, dove i Goti erano giunti nelle loro conquiste orientali” (that the ruins of the hunting palace built by Teodoricus in Galeata—a small village between Arezzo and Forlì—have a plan that is identical to those palaces of the Iranian area where the Goths arrived with their Oriental conquests): R. Bianchi Bandinelli.]


“Il trono dei leoni,” Annali Lateranensi 17 (1953): 321–52. [Possible origins of the Kushana art throne and connections with Egyptian, Iranian, and Jewish traditions; also about Atargatis’ cult.]

“Il frammento di Hannover e la tessitura palermitana di stile bizantino,” Rivista dell'Istituto Nazionale d'Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte, n.s., 2 (1953): 162–70. [Also about Iranian connections.]


Enciclopedia cattolica (Rome, 1948–54), s.v. “Sohâg” [Egyptian site].

L’arte iranica (Verona, 1954). [Historic and artistic summary, from prehistory to the Safavids.]


Introduzione allo studio dell’archeologia islamica. Le origini e il periodo omayyade (Venice and Rome, 1966). [Foreword by G. Levi della Vida, 13–20; introduction (pp. xxi–xxiii) and bibliographic notes (pp. xxv–xxviii) by Oleg Grabar.]
NOTES

Author's note: The present article is in part the result of research I conducted for my MA thesis, “L’Oriente è paese dalle molte vite e dalle molte storie...”: Ugo Monneret de Villard e gli studi di arte islamica in Italia” (Università degli Studi della Tuscia, 2005–6), under the supervision of Prof. Maria Andaloro. I continued this research in Paris at the Institut national d’histoire de l’art (INHA), thanks to a fellowship from the Fondazione per l’Arte della Compagnia di San Paolo (Nov. 2007–Oct. 2008). In 2013, I was awarded the Prix Marc de Montalembert (Fondation Marc de Montalembert) for a study dedicated to Monneret de Villard, based mainly on his correspondence with other scholars and intellectuals, and on other archival materials. This work is currently in preparation and I would be particularly appreciative of any information or references that readers might offer.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Maria Andaloro, Maria Vittoria Fontana, and Mariam Rosser-Owen for their assistance as my reader, and William Tronzo for their invaluable advice.

1. Until now, the most comprehensive bibliography of Monneret’s work, containing 197 titles, was that published by Angelo Michele Piemontese, “Bibliografia delle opere di Ugo Monneret de Villard (1871–1954),” Rivista degli Studi Orientali 58 (1984, but printed 1987): 1–12. An updated list, containing 272 titles, is found in the appendix to the present article.


4. See Oleg Grabar, The Formation of Islamic Art (New Haven, 1973). In the first chapter, Monneret’s name and books are repeatedly mentioned as fundamental references.


7. With Giorgio Levi Della Vida’s encouragement, Monneret undertook the important task of reorganizing the material collected throughout his career; the project, which was never completed, was supposed to have been financially supported by the Fondazione Caetani (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei) and the Istituto Nazionale di Archeologia e Storia dell’Arte (henceforth INASA) in Rome: see above pp. 47–48, and Maria Adelaida Laia Commneno, “Monneret islamista: Il catalogo Opere di arte islamica in Italia,” in L’eredità di Monneret de Villard a Milano: Atti del convegno (Milano, 27–29 novembre 2002), ed. Maria Grazia Sandri (Florence, 2004), 63.


9. Monneret’s working archives were donated in 1966 to INASA in Rome: the Fondo Monneret is preserved in the Biblioteca di Archeologia e Storia dell’Arte (BiASA) in Rome, once the library of the Istituto. See also Francesca Zannoni, “Il carteggio e l’archivio di studio di Ugo Monneret de Villard nella Biblioteca di Archeologia e Storia dell’Arte di Roma,” in Sandri, L’eredità di Monneret, 15–21. This valuable collection, which deserves a thorough study, includes some correspondence (dating between 1937 and 1954) and a large number of working materials; the numerous cards and folders, strictly divided by subject and containing bibliographical references, reveal Monneret’s systematic approach. The unpublished manuscript “Opere di arte islamica in Italia” is preserved in the Fondo Monneret, together with many related documents and notes (BiASA, Fondo Monneret: scatola 6, cartella 31). The BiASA also holds Monneret’s personal library (given to INASA in 1955). A valuable collection of approximately 6,000 photographs is preserved at INASA, while more than 1,600 negatives are preserved in the Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale (ICCD, Rome).

10. “It came from the files I made up, for my own use, for every Islamic art monument that, at the beginning of my Oriental archaeology studies, I found in a museum, in a church’s treasure, or in whichever collection....The files for many of the objects contained fairly broad descriptions, to which I would add the necessary bibliographical references; for others the elaboration was a lot simpler. Finally, for many others [the files contained] merely a mention of the object I had seen. This was, therefore, all working material, which I kept collecting until World War II”: see Ugo Monneret de Villard, “Prefazione,” in Opere d’arte islamica in Italia (unpublished), 9, in BiASA, Fondo Monneret: scatola 6, cartella 31.

11. Monneret also complained about the absence of a museum and of a chair of Islamic art in Italy, and he listed a series of Oriental items mentioned in ancient inventories, thereby tracing a short history of Italian taste and of collectors of Oriental artifacts, such as the Medici and Este families. Ibid.
12. The key steps in this complex trajectory can be deduced. Monneret de Villard's academic development can be divided into three main phases, somewhat corresponding to his various interests and activities: an early formative period, from his graduation in 1904 to the early 1920s, spent in Milan; a second phase, which included numerous archaeological missions in Africa (about 1921–37); and a third, less dynamic, but strongly reflective and productive moment, spent in Rome from 1937 until his death in 1954. These three phases were proposed by Andrea Augenti in his seminal essay “Per una storia dell’archeologia medievale italiana: Ugo Monneret de Villard,” *Archeologia Medievale* 28 (2001): 7–24.


15. Monneret attended courses characterized by a humanistic openness that would probably be inconceivable today in a school for engineers. For Camillo Boito and Monneret de Villard, see Alessandro Piccinelli, “Alle origini del Novecento: Arte, architettura e città nell’opera di Monneret de Villard (1903–1921)” (MA thesis, Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia [IUAV], 1985–86). I am grateful to Mr. Piccinelli for giving me a copy of this interesting work. See also Guido Zucconi, *L’invenzione del passato. Camillo Boito e l’architettura neomedievale, 1885–1890* (Venice 1997), and Augenti, “Per una storia.”

16. The key steps in this complex trajectory can be deduced by cross-referencing Monneret’s early writings with the many articles in Sandri, *L’eredità di Monneret.* Another important text concerning Monneret’s scholarly formation is Piccinelli, “Alle origini del Novecento.” See also Silvia Armando, *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960– ). s.v. “Monneret de Villard, Ugo.”


21. Only a brief anonymous biographical entry mentions some courses on Oriental archaeology that Monneret would have attended in Germany and Great Britain: *Chi è? Dizionario biografico degli italiani d’oggi* (Rome, 1948), s.v. “Monneret de Villard, Ugo.” If we could fully rely on this text, it would be easier to explain Monneret’s interests and training. His first documented travels to the Middle East (mainly Egypt, but also Istanbul and Jerusalem) date from the early 1920s. Monneret mentions his trips to the “Oriente” beginning in 1908, likely (and interestingly!) referring to his visits to Byzantine lands such as Greece and Dalmatia. See Ugo Monneret de Villard, “La missione archeologica italiana in Egitto, 1921–28,” *Oriente Moderno* 8 (1928): 268.

22. During my research in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, I discovered letters and notes sent by Monneret to Achille Ratti (the future Pope Pio XI), as well as to Tommaso Gallarati Scotti and Alessandro Casati, two young members of the Milanese aristocracy; the correspondence with Casati (54 documents dated between 1912 and 1948, Biblioteca Ambrosiana: Casati 42, busta 16) is particularly interesting. The Biblioteca also owns two fragments of parchment given by Monneret in 1937 (file: Y 225 sup.). Another letter in the Fondo Casati, written by Antonio Meli Lupi di Soragna, concerns the trip he made to Greece with Monneret: see Lombardini, “Carteggio Corrado Ricci,” 27n28. A possible connection between Monneret and the Arabist Eugenio Griffini, who worked at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, is proposed in Sandri, “Monneret de Villard nell’archivio del Politecnico,” 12n27. Griffini was appointed as curator of the Palatine Library in Cairo. See also Bruna Soravia, *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani, s.v. “Griffini, Eugenio.”

23. Piero Craveri, *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani, s.v. “Casati, Alessandro.”

24. “And what about Egypt? And the Pyramids? (What bourgeois questions!) And the buried princesses? Thanks for the
photographs you promised me: I would be ever so obliged, because here it is terribly hard to get hold of photographs of Egyptian things. And these are so very interesting to me."; Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Casati 42, busta 16, letter no. 2, written in Milan, February 14, 1906.

25. Monneret attained his Libera Docenza (university teaching qualification) to teach a course on architectural history he entitled “Archeologia medievale”: see Augenti, “Per una storia,” 9, and Sandri, “Monneret de Villard nell’archivio del Politecnico” 12.


27. The main reference is Marta Petricioli, Archeologia e Mare Nostrum. Le missioni archeologiche nella politica mediterranea dell’Italia 1898 / 1935 (Rome, 1990). The book is based on documents from the Ministero degli Affari Esteri dated between the end of nineteenth century and World War II. Monneret’s name appears repeatedly: see Petricioli, Archeologia e Mare Nostrum, index; see also Augenti, “Per una storia,” and the many writings by Monneret himself.


29. In 1921, Monneret wrote to Roberto Paribeni (head of the Ufficio delle Missioni Scientifiche in Levante) and to the Khedive, proposing a structured study of Coptic art in order to change the general direction of archaeological studies in Egypt: see Petricioli, Archeologia e Mare Nostrum, 252–53. In 1925, he drew up the “Programma per una missione storico-archeologica italiana in Oriente,” which included many expressions of cultural propaganda: Petricioli, Archeologia e Mare Nostrum, 256–57.

30. For five years beginning in 1922 Monneret was in charge of completing the study and publication of Coptic monuments. Petricioli, Archeologia e Mare Nostrum, 254.

31. In 1924, Monneret became the director of restoration for Deir Anba Sim’an. Ibid., 255.

32. See Augenti, “Per una storia,” appendix, p. 22.

33. As vividly depicted by Donald M. Reid, “Westerners stepping ashore variously imagined themselves entering the world of the pharaohs, the Bible, the Greeks and Romans, and the Quran and the Arabian Nights.” Donald Malcom Reid, Whose Pharaohs? Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I (Berkeley, 2002), 2.

34. See above n. 28.

35. Beside the cooperation of the Comité de conservation des monuments de l’art arabe, in 1926 the Service des antiquités appointed him director of archaeological excavations of Christian monuments in Egypt: Petricioli, Archeologia e Mare Nostrum, 261–63. It is also worthwhile to mention the words of Gaston Wiet, who defined the Italian archaeologist as “l’archéologue le plus compétent, le plus documenté sur l’Egypte du moyen âge”: Gaston Wiet, “Préface,” in Ugo Monneret de Villard, La necropoli musulmana di Aswan (Cairo, 1930). At that time Wiet was director of the Cairo Museum of Islamic Art: Petricioli, Archeologia e Mare Nostrum, 250n117, and André Raymond, “Bibliographie de l’œuvre scientifique de M. Gaston Wiet,” Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale 59 (1960): p. IX. “The broadening of my research is an obvious necessity: Coptic and Islamic art, living and developing side by side in the same country, could not and did not remain unrelated to each other; the mutual exchanges were daily and deep. The knowledge of one art implies and requires the knowledge of the other.” Monneret de Villard, “La missione archeologica,” 276.

36. “We must remember that the Orient is a place of many lives and stories, and that in every area layers of different civilizations overlap; the archaeologist must excavate them all and study them with equal love and equal science”: Monneret de Villard, “La missione archeologica,” 270. See also Augenti, “Per una storia,” 10–15, highlighting how Monneret was possibly a pioneer of the stratigraphic method.

37. Notably, Monneret often visited the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo: many folders in Monneret’s photographic archives (INASA, Rome) contain photographs of artifacts preserved in the museums. Also, many of the encrusted panels mentioned or illustrated in his book Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia. I, La cassetta incrostata della Cappella Palatina di Palermo (Rome, 1938), were preserved in the same museum, while others were in the Egyptian Museum. See, respectively, ibid. pls. VIII–XI, and pls. XII, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX, XXXV.


39. Monneret de Villard, La cassetta incrostata della Cappella Palatina. For an updated study on this technique, see Marian Rosser-Owen, “Incrusted with Ivory: Observations on a

To be more precise, the items examined belong to the ANI­MI (Associazione Nazionale per gli Interessi del Mezzogiorno d’Italia, see p. 39 above. They are the Archivio Storico ANI­MI and the Fondo Archivistico Umberto Zanotti Bianco, both preserved in the Biblioteca Giustino Fortunato, Rome: see www.animi.it, where general indices of the documents can be found. See also Valeriana Carinci and Antonio Jannazzo, “Sul riordinamento dell’Archivio Zanotti Bianco (Palazzo Taverna, Roma),” *Archivio Storico per la Calabria e la Lucania* 49 (1989): 229–34, and Aida Giosi, *Inventario del Fondo Umberto Zanotti Bianco* (1922–1963) (Rome, 2009). Many other papers regarding Zanotti Bianco’s private and public life (including letters written by Monneret) have different classifications, which will be specified below. Concerning the letters, it is worthwhile to observe that in all cases we are confronted with passive correspondences, that is to say, we can only deduce information from what Zanotti Bianco received, not from what he wrote. I wish to thank Dr. Cinzia Cassani Craveri and the staff of the library Giustino Fortunato for their kind cooperation.


44. As regards Islamic archaeology, Zanotti Bianco carried on some archeological excavations in the vicinity of Lucera.


46. See www.animi.it; Paoletti, “Umberto Zanotti Bianco e la Società Magna Grecia,” 9 and 14. The author reports the opinion of Achille Starace, secretary of the Partito Nazionale Fascista: “… il nome stesso dell’Associazione Nazionale per gli interessi del Mezzogiorno suonava come affermazione di critica e di sfiducia” (…even the name, National Association for the Interests of Southern Italy, sounded in itself as a claim of criticism and mistrust). After the fall of the Fascists, the value of Zanotti’s activities was also recognized at an institutional level. He was among the founders of Italia Nostra, and the Italian Red Cross.

47. About the “culto della Romanità” during the period of Fascist rule, see Barbara, *L’archeologia degli Italiani*, 144–46. See also Massimo Bernabò, *Ossessioni bizantine e cultura artistica in Italia: Tra D’Anunzio, fascismo e dopoguerra* (Naples, 2003), 92–99, notably for the political opposition between National (Roman) art and Oriental art. In order not to make the proposed cultural framework misleading, I must note that it is not my intention to depict a rigid opposition between “serious,” independent scholars and scholars influenced by the Fascist regime. Rather, they all comprised an intellectual community in which people were often connected by scientific as well as personal relationships. For instance, consider that Paolo Orsi was a senator of the Reign and that his political ideas were more moderate than Zanotti’s. This did not prevent a cultural collaboration between the two. Moreover, the 1920 list of the members of the Società Magna Grecia includes names such as Riccardo Gualino, Lionello Venturi and Giorgio Levi Della Vida, Roberto Almagià, Ugo Ojetti, and Gustavo Giovanni, people who represented very different cultural and political convictions. What is undeniable is the fact that some subjects—Islamic art among them—were overlooked by the *scienza ufficiale* because they did not fit well with its propagandistic goals.


52. The letter is preserved in the folder Monneret de Villard, *Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia* (ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.III.03.UA29).

53. “As for supporting your proposal, you know well [that] I am not in a position to support it whatever it is...It cer-
دينة is very sad that over here the study of Islamic art is so little cultivated, and a dedicated chair (which Orsi would like created in Rome, and rightly so) would be very useful": ibid. In the letter Levi Della Vida also insisted on the importance of assigning a possible chair of Islamic art to a broad specialist: “Occorrerebbe tuttavia che si fosse chiamato a ricoprirla avesse conoscenza dell’arte islamica in generale, per essere in grado di dare ai suoi allievi quella cultura preliminare che è indispensabile introduzione a ogni specializzazione ulteriore. Occorre sempre diffidare delle specializzazioni premature! Senonché, ripeto, si tratta di iniziativa che non mi riguardano. Videant consules” (Nevertheless the person designated to occupy this chair should have a broad knowledge of Islamic art in general, in order to be able to transmit to his pupils that preliminary cultural background that is an essential introduction to any further specialization. We must disregard early specializations! Anyway, I repeat, these are initiatives that do not concern me. Videant consules [Let the consuls see to it (that the state suffers no damage)].) Levi Della Vida apparently referred to someone in particular, possibly a scholar suggested by Zanotti, but being discreet—unfortunately for us!—neglected to mention the individual by name in his answer, where a contrasting opinion was expressed. Since the letter is preserved in the file Monneret de Villard, Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia (see n. 52 above), one could infer that the possible candidate suggested by Zanotti Bianco was Monneret de Villard himself. Levi Della Vida’s negative judgment would, in this case, be particularly interesting, especially considering the longstanding friendship and mutual respect that would bind him and Monneret in subsequent years.


55. Giuseppe Gabrieli, “Per la istituzione di una cattedra di storia dell’arte islamica in Italia,” La Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno, March 7, 1934. On Giuseppe Gabrieli, see Bruna Soravia, Dizionario biografico degli Italiani, s.v. “Gabrieli, Giuseppe,” with other bibliographic references. See also http://www.lincei-celebrazioni.it/igabrieli.html

56. “…è tutta una ricerca e un inventariamento da fare, nelle piccole e grandi collezioni private, registrando, illust-

rando, questi oggetti e manufatti d’arte musulmana ancor reperibili nei palazzi, nelle chiese, nei conventi…” (broad research [should be carried out] and inventories [should be compiled] [working] in small and big private collections, recording, illustrating those objects and artifacts of Islamic art still traceable in palaces, churches, monasteries…); Gabrieli, “Per la istituzione di una cattedra.”


58. We do not know where or when Monneret and Zanotti first met. However, they had both been involved in the movement known as Italian Catholic Modernism. A possible connection may have been their mutual friend Tommaso Gallarati Scotti, a fervent follower of “Modernismo,” who had worked with Monneret on a project to publish the mystical poets: see the correspondence between Monneret de Villard and the writer and intellectual Giuseppe Prezzolini, in Alfonso Botti, “Giuseppe Prezzolini e il dibattito modernista (II),” in Fonti e Documenti, n.12 (1982–83), 79–127. Zanotti and Gallarati Scotti, a prominent member of the ANIMI, first met in Sicily, after the 1908 earthquake. It is worth remarking that Gallarati Scotti did not share Zanotti’s concern for the archaeological heritage of the region, as can be gleaned in a letter he wrote to Zanotti in 1913: “…io di denaro per i vecchi cocci non ne cerco e ti prego di non dirmene più parola perché io sono esasperato di vedere che mentre mi preoccupo delle finanze dell’Associazione, tu non ti curi che dell’archeologia” (… I am not looking for money for old pottery, and please do not speak about it anymore because I have had more than enough of worrying about the Association’s finances, while you do not care about anything else but potsherds); Paoletti, “Umberto Zanotti Bianco e la Società Magna Grecia,” 163–32.

59. This is the first letter in the folder Monneret de Villard, Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia (ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.III.03.UA29); it is dated July 2, 1934.

60. Monneret wrote: “Debo dirle che già anni or sono avevo cominciato a raccogliere materiale per uno studio dell’arte musulmana in Italia—note, schede ecc…Poi tutto fu messo da parte, causa il troppo lavoro dei miei scavi in oriente” (I must tell you that years ago I had already started collecting materials for a study of Islamic art in Italy—notes, files, etc.…Then I had to put everything aside, because of the amount of work my excavations in the Orient required). Ibid.

61. “I looked at my materials again: there is a lot, and I mean a lot, an awful lot more to do. But looking at my old notes and reading Sarre’s article and Orsi’s note again, I had an idea that I am going to propose to you. Please let me know frankly what you think about it.” Ibid.

62. “To believe that the Government will do anything is vain: the best they can do is to take some presumptuous, happy-go-lucky idiot who might have scribbled some compilation article and stick him [on] a University chair. Better to do nothing: if anything can be done, it will have to come from private citizens.” Ibid.
63. “...the painted ivory boxes, the oliphants, the textiles.... Then, for example, to publish in full and in every detail the Cappella Palatina’s ceiling, a marvelous repertoire of all the Islamic decorative motifs in southern Italy.” Ibid.

64. “Sono veramente roba siculo-italia meridionale? E non piuttosto della Siria, Egitto o Mesopotamia? Vede che la cosa non è lieve” (Is this really stuff from Sicily or southern Italy? And not rather from Syria, Egypt, or Mesopotamia? You will agree that is not to be taken lightly). Ibid. This concern is here expressed quite generically, but we know in particular that the scholar would later attribute the painted ivory caskets to the Mesopotamian area. Monneret de Villard, Le pitture musulmane, 29–30; Monneret de Villard, “Arte cristiana e musulmana del Vicino Oriente,” 508. See also Silvia Armando, “Avori arabo-siculi: cassette, pissidi, olífanti. Un taccuino inedito di Ugo Monneret de Villard,” in Studi in onore di Maria Andaloro [tentative title, forthcoming].

65. ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.III.03.UA29, folder Monneret de Villard. Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia, letter dated July 2, 1934. The idea of gathering all the data in a corpus reflects Monneret’s positivist approach; this was due to his personal background, but it was also typical of his time. In a related field of interest, one could recall the work by Max Van Berchem, Matériaux pour un corpus inscriptionum arabicarum (Paris, 1894), as the output of a similarly positivist approach. Nevertheless, while Van Berchem worked with a big team of researchers charged with collecting inscriptions from all over the Eastern world, Monneret de Villard carried out this enormous compiling endeavor almost entirely on his own.

66. “For my part I like the idea and I would put all the good will and hard work I am capable of and the little I know about it into it: but let’s be clear, I have no money to give. We must find money; you wouldn’t have some benefactor...

67. Letter from Agnello (an architectural historian from Syracuse), and postcard from Carucci (director of the Archivio Storico Salernitano), from Naples, both dated March 27, 1935 (ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.III.03.UA29, folder Monneret de Villard. Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia).

68. This letter (dated September 10, 1934) is also in ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.III.03.UA29, folder Monneret de Villard. Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia.

69. “Conservatore del Museo d’art musulman d’Alger, un très bon orientaliste.” Ibid.

70. “I spoke to him about the Islamic monuments in southern Italy and about the necessity of studying them. He was very interested...I proposed that we send him a few photos of the Islamic monuments and objects of southern Italy... He was charmed by the idea. I believe that you have a much better chance to get somewhere with him rather than with Sarre, who is sick and aged.” Ibid.

71. In a letter dated February 6, 1936, he announced: “Sono ritornato ieri in Italia dai miei lavori archeologici a Meroe. Ormai credo che con la Nubia non avrò più nulla a che fare se non elaborare il materiale raccolto e pubblicarlo: lavoro da tavolino” (I came back to Italy yesterday from my archaeological work in Meroe. I do not think I will have any more to do with Nubia, except to elaborate on the materials I collected and publish them [office work]; ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.III.03.UA29, folder Monneret de Villard. Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia.

72. After his return from Nubia, Monneret planned a trip to London; in April he would have gone to Egypt, then to Iran for a couple of months (ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.III.03.UA29, folder Monneret de Villard. Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia, letter dated April 15, 1936). Between January and March 1937 he was in Axum (Augenti, “Per una storia,” 7); the following year he went again to Ethiopia (Addis Ababa, Gondar, and Axum), between March and April (see ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.III.03.UA29, folder Monneret de Villard. Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia, letter from Addis Ababa dated March 10, 1938).

73. “So I decided to take up again my studies of Islamic art in southern Italy and Sicily and to rush headlong into this mare magnum. I brought back a lot of comparative materials from Cairo, which will be very useful, but first of all I must collect the materials in Italy. Are you still interested in the matter as much as you were a couple of years ago? In that case would you be willing to help me? The help I need right now is to find photographs, information, and articles...”
buried in magazines unobtainable in Milan and things like that." See the letter from Milan dated February 6, 1936, ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.III.03.UA29, folder Monneret de Villard. Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia.

78. Letter dated February 25, 1936, ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.III.03.UA29, folder Monneret de Villard. Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia. Besides many painted ivories, Monneret also requested some photographic details of the “cofanetto intarsiato in avorio.” The letter also informs us that the plan had slightly changed in the meantime: the proposal of two distinct short books, dedicated, respectively, to the painted ivories and to the Cappella Palatina ceilings, had been replaced with the idea of a single work dedicated to Islamic painting.

79. “You cannot imagine the large number of Islamic materials from Italy scattered across museums all over the world: this makes it quite difficult to study them.” Letter dated March 10, 1936, from Milan (ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.III.03.UA29, folder Monneret de Villard. Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia).

80. Two typescripts dated May 29 and June 5, 1936, as well as a receipt for £34.5, for the purchase of photographic reproductions of the Cappella Palatina ceilings (ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.III.03.UA29, folder Monneret de Villard. Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia).

81. “...non sono un gran che” wrote Mingazzini (ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.III.03.UA29, folder Monneret de Villard. Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia). The letter also informs us that the plan had slightly changed in the meantime: the proposal of two distinct short books, dedicated, respectively, to the painted ivories and to the Cappella Palatina ceilings, had been replaced with the idea of a single work dedicated to Islamic painting.

82. “With this abundance of materials, I will be able to progress in my study of the Arabic part of the Cappella Palatina’s ceiling.” Letter dated September 26, 1936 (ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.III.03.UA29, folder Monneret de Villard. Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia).

83. “My dearest friend, I have completed the first issue of the series of studies on the Islamic monuments of Italy, of which we had an opportunity to speak before…It is about the encrusted casket at the Cappella Palatina in Palermo.” Letter dated May 14, 1937 (ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.III.03.UA29, folder Monneret de Villard, Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia).

84. “Io sarei dell’opinione di pubblicare la serie Monumenti musulmani d’Italia in fascicoli, ognuno trattando un solo argomento. Questo sulla cassetta della Cappella Palatina di Palermo sarebbe il primo. Ho già raccolto moltissimo materiale per il II (gli avori dipinti) e per il III (gli avori scolpiti) ma in Italia mi mancano troppi libri e debo attendere l’occasione di andare a passare un paio di mesi all’estero per terminarli. Ad ogni modo ogni fascicolo tratterebbe di un argomento ben delimitato, perciò credo debba stare a sé [sic]. Salvo poi magari a rilegare i fascicoli in un volume. Anche dal punto di vista vendita un fascicolo a prezzi limitati si vende più facilmente che non un grosso volume di alto prezzo” (I would be inclined to publish the series Islamic Monuments of Italy as individual issues, each dealing with a single topic. This one, on the casket at the Cappella Palatina in Palermo, would be the first. I have already collected a lot of material for the second (on painted ivories) and third (on sculpted ivories), but in Italy I am missing too many books and I have to wait for a chance to spend a couple of months abroad to complete them. In any case, each issue would deal with a very specific topic, so I believe they should be kept separate. Except, perhaps in the future, they might be bound into a single collection. Also from a commercial point of view, a single issue at a lower price is easier to sell than a large, high-priced collection). Ibid.

85. In regard to such matters, many important names emerge from the documents—some of them wishing to buy the book, others to be informed about the publication—among them Bernard Berenson, Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, Ernst Herzfeld, Ernst Kühnel, Arthur Kingsley Porter, and François Béguinot. Marguerite Van Berchem had also expressed interest in the forthcoming book: “J'ai été fort intéressée par l’annonce d’une série de publications sur le monuments Musulmans d’Italie. Bravo. Voilà qui vient combler une lacune que je déplorais depuis longtemps. Je vous félicite d’avoir mis ce projet à exécution. Je sousscrirai bien volontiers au volume de Monneret de Villard. Réservez m’en donc un exemplaire” (I have been really interested in the announcement of a series of publications on the Islamic monuments of Italy. Bravo. It finally fills a void I have been lamenting for a long time. Congratulations on initiating this project. I will happily subscribe to Monneret de Villard’s series. Please put aside a copy for me.). ANIMI, Fondo Archivistico Zanotti Bianco A.1.3. UA13 (1935), Corrispondenza in ordine cronologico, letter from Paris, dated July 7 (no year marked).

86. Four typewritten copies announce the publication: ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.III.03.UA29, folder Monneret de Villard, Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia, letter dated February 23, 1938.

87. For a comprehensive list of the publications of the Collezione Meridionale, see Umberto Zanotti Bianco, L’Associazione Nazionale per gli interessi del Mezzogiorno d’Italia nei suoi primi cinquant’anni di vita (Rome, 1960), 325–27.

88. Please remember that Zanotti Bianco was persecuted and arrested: see p. 40 above.

89. Still, in the 1950s, Monneret stressed how these problems prevented him from easily accomplishing his studies: “La guerra, dapprima rendendo impossibile [sic] i viaggi, e poi la sconfitta, la catastrofe economica, la svalutazione della moneta distruggendo completamente le mie risorse finanziarie mi resero impossibile ogni continuazione del lavoro” (War, which made travel impossible, and then defeat, the economic catastrophe, and the devaluation of the currency, which destroyed completely my financial resources, made it impossible for me to continue my work): see Monneret de Villard, “Prefazione,” in Opere d’arte islamica in Italia (unpublished), 9, in BiASA, Fondo Monneret: scatola 6, cartella 31.

90. Perry Blithe Cott, Siculo-Arabic Ivories (Princeton, N.J., 1939); José Ferrandis, Marfiles árabes de Occidente, 2 vols.
We know precisely when the change was made, thanks to a letter dated September 30, 1937 (ANIMI, Archivio Storico ANIMI, A.II.03.UA29, folder Monneret de Villard. Monumenti dell’arte musulmana in Italia): Monneret moved to his new house in Via Catalana at the beginning of October 1937.

See Levi Della Vida reporting Oleg Grabar’s deduction: “Premessa di Giorgio Levi Della Vida,” in Monneret de Villard, Introduzione allo studio dell’archeologia islamica, p. XIII. After 1938, Monneret published other scattered papers concerning Islamic artifacts preserved in Italy (see above n. 6).

Monneret wrote requesting information about some Islamic ceramics found by Zanotti Bianco and Paola Zancani Montuoro during archaeological excavations at Foce del Sele, as well as about some bacin i walled in the churches of Calabria. Letter dated March 17, 1954 (ANIMI, Fondo Archivistico Zanotti Bianco, Sezione B, Serie 5-53, Società Magna Grecia (corrispondenza 1954)).

The documents preserved in the Archivio Storico della Sapienza (fascicolo del docente 1717) attest to the payment rendered after the conclusion of only two months (letter of assignment, October 5, 1944): “Insegnamento Archeologia Cristiana per i corsi accelerati nei mesi di settembre e ottobre dell’a.a. 1943–44”; other documents written in December 1944 (Archivio Storico della Sapienza, fascicolo del docente 1717) attest to the payment rendered after the courses were concluded; this leads us to infer that information about an annual course reported by Levi Della Vida and often repeated by other scholars is imprecise: see Giorgio Levi Della Vida, “Ugo Monneret de Villard (1881–1954), Bibliografia,” Rivista degli Studi Orientali 39 (1955): 177.

Even if the Scuola Orientale had not given any official space to disciplines connected to art history before 1944, it was nevertheless founded, in 1903, by teachers concerned with Eastern studies, such as Angelo De Gubernatis, Ignazio Guidi, Baldassarre Labanca, Ludovico Nocentini, and Celestino Schiaparelli; this group was formally part of the Facoltà di Lettere, but administratively independent. See Raniero Gnoli, “La scuola orientale romana,” in Le grandi Scuole della facoltà (Rome, 1996), 383.

The first chair in art history had been established in Rome by Adolfo Venturi in 1890.

Records of the gathering of the Consiglio di Facoltà, November 20, 1944 (Archivio Storico della Sapienza, fascicolo del docente 1717).

From the records of the gathering of the Consiglio di Facoltà, November 20, 1944 (Archivio Storico della Sapienza, fascicolo del docente 1717): “Monneret’s great merits … scientific expertise… impressive excavating activity… huge popularity outside Italy… noble and brave political past.” The latter statement could suggest once more that, despite Monneret’s collaboration with Fascist government institutions, he was not involved from an ideological point of view.

“Necessity to preserve as much as possible the important position of Italian culture in Egypt and all the Near Orient: it is a matter of keeping intact a noble and fruitful tradition. To this end perhaps nobody could help as effectively as Monneret.” Ibid.

This was the opinion of Oliverio, supported by De Sanctis, Carabellese, and Cardinali (Archivio Storico della Sapienza, fascicolo del docente 1717). The episode is also mentioned in Levi Della Vida, “Ugo Monneret de Villard, Bibliografia,” 177.

It is worth highlighting a document preserved in the Archivio Storico della Sapienza, fascicolo del docente 1717, and dated November 21 (one day after the board gathering), in which the Ministry of National Education asked for clarification: “Si prega la S.V. di far conoscere a questo ministero se codesta Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia abbia mai formulata una proposta per la nomina del Prof. U. Monneret de Villard a ordinario di Storia dell’arte Musulmana e Copta presso codesta R. Università” (Pray inform this Ministry whether the Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia has ever proposed that Prof. U. Monneret de Villard be nominated...
as full professor of Islamic and Coptic art history at this University). The interpretation of the document is intriguing but remains uncertain, since in the two documents the course is given different names: *Storia dell’arte dell’Oriente medievale* and *Storia dell’arte musulmana e copta*

105. The teaching post was held by Umberto Scerrato, both in Rome and Naples. For this piece of information I am grateful to Maria Vittoria Fontana, currently professor of Islamic art and archaeology at La Sapienza University, Rome.


107. For general information about the correspondence, see above n. 9.


110. “...the art of the Near Orient since the third century until the great Turkish empires,” Rome, BiASA, *Fondo Monneret*, Ms. I.6. The letter is undated, but it can be assigned to 1950, thanks to the presence of other related documents. See also Zannoni, “Il carteggio e l’archivio di studio di Ugo Monneret de Villard,” 21.


112. “...later on, Oriental art was finished”; similar considerations can also be found in the printed text. Ibid.

113. See above n. 9; see also Zannoni, “Il carteggio e l’archivio di studio di Ugo Monneret de Villard,” 19–20, regarding the photographic documents. Documenting relations to the publication of Monneret De Villard’s *Le pitture musulmane* are preserved in Rome, BiASA, *Fondo Monneret*, Ms. I.4. The earliest letter is dated July 24, 1946; the last document was written in September 1950.


115. It would be extremely worthwhile to check whether letters by Monneret are preserved in Richard Ettinghausen’s correspondence.


119. The funds were provided by Dumbarton Oaks, the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, and Princeton University, which also made available negatives and chemical products (Morey’s letters to Monneret, Rome, BiASA, *Fondo Monneret*, Ms. I.4: August 30, 1946; October 18, 1946; March 25, 1948). These and other American institutions (together with the Warburg Institute and the British Museum) were promised a complete set of the photos as compensation for the costs of the photographing campaign. The list of the buyers is in Monneret de Villard, *Le pitture musulmane*, 9.

120. This can be inferred from the BiASA archives: there are, in fact, no documents for this period, which is followed by a series of letters related to the publication of the book.

121. Restoration work was conducted between May 1948 and 1953. I wish to thank my friend and colleague Francesca Manuela Anzelmo for providing me with this information, also included in Francesca Manuela Anzelmo, “I soffitti islamici della Cappella Palatina di Palermo e le coperture lignee dipinte della Sicilia Normanna. Struttura decorazione vicende conservative” (MA thesis, Università degli Studi della Tuscia, 2003–4), 74–81; see as well Francesca Manuela Anzelmo, “Un illustre inedito. L’ICR e la prima campagna di restauri dei soffitti della Cappella Palatina di Palermo (1948–1953),” in *Studi in onore di Maria Andaloro* (tentative title, forthcoming). A detailed study of the restoration work done on the ceilings is found in Francesca Manuela Anzelmo, “I soffitti della Cappella Palatina di Palermo e l’orizzonte mediterraneo” (PhD diss., Università degli Studi della Tuscia, 2013).
Monneret’s delicate health is mentioned by the scholar himself in many letters and writings, as well as by friends, such as Levi Della Vida, “Ugo Monneret de Villard, Bibliografia,” 179. We learn from the correspondence related to the Cappella Palatina ceilings that between November 1946 and February 1947 he moved from his house in Via Catalana in Rome to Via dei Monti Parioli 64, where the nursing home Villa San Francesco is located.


The issue of the construction of the ceilings reveals the limits of a study realized from afar: Monneret in fact referred to the necessity of dismantling part of the roof in order to understand the assembly technique. The extrados of the ceiling is actually visible through a cavity wall: see Vladi-
cache of materials is preserved in BiASA, Fondo Monneret: scatola 6, scatola 7, and scatola 9. It is evident that the actual order does not always match that presumably given by Monneret.

135. In BiASA, Fondo Monneret, scatola 6, cartella 34, c.7, a letter from the Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione testifies to the assignment of the work to D. S. Rice. We learn from a letter that Monneret and Rice met for the first time between 1950 and 1951: see BiASA, Fondo Monneret, scatola 1, cartella 5, 1951: "J’étais très heureux de faire votre connaissance et j’espère que nous nous venons à voir [?] très prochainement" (I was delighted to meet you and hope you will come to see me very soon).

136. This material (also containing correspondence with museums) is particularly scattered and to understand Rice’s approach would require a wide-ranging analysis.


139. Curatola, L’eredità dell’Islam, 37.


141. “The unitary and systematic description of more than 400 objects will reveal a richness, unsuspected by most, of Islamic art objects in Italy and will hugely help the progression of studies within a discipline we have sadly been disregarding, with the exception—wonderful indeed, but isolated—of Monneret de Villard.”: Levi Della Vida, “Ugo Monneret de Villard, Bibliografia,” 179.

RAQQQA: THE FORGOTTEN EXCAVATION OF AN ISLAMIC SITE IN SYRIA BY THE OTTOMAN IMPERIAL MUSEUM IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

The site of Raqqa in northern Syria was first excavated in the early twentieth century by the Ottoman Imperial Museum. It was, indeed, the first and only Islamic site to be excavated by that institution. However, until recently the very fact that these early excavations in Raqqa took place was overlooked in the scholarship. It is now possible not only to document these excavations concretely but also to assert that Raqqa was among the earliest Islamic sites subject to archaeological investigation.

RAQQQA AS AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Traditionally, Samarkand, first excavated in 1885 by the Russian scholar N.I. Veselovsky, has been regarded as the first Islamic site to undergo archaeological investigation. However, since the areas excavated by him were in the oldest part of the Islamic city and his focus was on the ancient Soghdian center of Afrasiyab, it is necessary to reassess the purpose, duration, methods, and finds of this excavation—particularly in light of original Russian publications and documentation related to it—in order to understand its significance for Islamic archaeology.

The other notable early excavation of an Islamic site is Qal’at Bani Hammad, in Algeria, in 1898. However, it appears that the excavations begun there under the auspices of the Archaeological Society of Constantine, with very modest resources, lasted only a few days. More methodical excavations were conducted later, in 1908, by Beylié, under the auspices of the French society of archaeological excavations.

In comparison with the two excavations above, Raqqa appears to have been a relatively long one, conducted with a focus on the medieval Islamic city and especially its ceramic production, which was thought to date to the late eighth century of the Abbasid era. While determining the earliest excavation of an Islamic site has some importance in terms of the scientific methods employed, the duration of the expeditions, and the outcomes achieved, it is possible that today none of these would be regarded as scientific digs based on current standards.

For the historiography of Islamic archaeology, I believe it is important to understand the relative significance of these early excavations of Islamic sites in their own context. Leaving the large task of Afrasiyab to other scholars, in this article I will focus on the case of Raqqa.

The old town of Kallinikos, which was rooted in Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine times, was renamed Raqqa after the Arab conquest in 639–40. The Umayyads (661–750) built two palaces and a mosque, along with a new market, a bridge, and a canal to supply water to the city. In the eighth century, a larger establishment in mudbrick was built to the west as a companion town, Rafiqa. In fact, what is mostly referred to as Raqqa throughout this study actually concerns Rafiqa. This new town in the shape of a horseshoe was designed to house troops. Later, between 786 and 808, the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid, well known from the tales of The Thousand and One Nights, built a complex of palaces further to the north along with canals. A separate industry of ceramics was established in 771 outside the old city walls of Raqqa in the northeastern extremity to satisfy the everyday needs of the garrison city of Rafiqa. This activity more or less ceased in the ninth century due to security problems in northern Mesopotamia, but a similar industrial development picked up pace after
As mentioned above, the Ottoman Imperial Museum conducted two excavation campaigns at Raqqa, in 1905–6 and 1908. Each lasted a few months and the finds were immediately sent to the Museum in Istanbul. More items from Raqqa reached the Imperial Museum after being confiscated. Objects from the excavations were exhibited early on in the Imperial Museum. However, as the supply and demand for Raqqa ceramics dwindled in the foreign art markets, no further studies were conducted on the Raqqa finds owned by the Museum. The story of the first excavations in Raqqa remained undiscovered for over a hundred years, completely forgotten and overlooked by art historians who studied the famous ceramics of Raqqa. As part of a larger study on the Raqqa ceramics, I translated and published fifty documents on the history of these early excavations, primarily correspondence between local officers in Raqqa and the Imperial Museum. This initial study unequivocally established the time and duration of the excavations, and also brought to light some information on the circumstances that led to their being undertaken, as well as on the finds sent to the Imperial Museum. Many of these documents are now preserved in the library of the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, heir to the Ottoman Imperial Museum after the fall of the empire, as well as in the Ottoman Division of the Prime Ministry State Archives of the Turkish Republic in Istanbul.

This article results from my translation and study of the remaining correspondence on Raqqa in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum Archives, consisting of over 150 documents, which allows us to look at the history of the excavations in their entirety, rather than as snapshots. The interesting series of events that prompted the Ottoman Imperial Museum to excavate the site became especially clear after this study. In addition, unpublished letters of the Museum officer Theodore Macridy, written while he was digging in Raqqa, provide new details on conditions at the site. This discussion of the history of the excavations will be followed by a review of the finds from Raqqa and how they were displayed in the early collection of Islamic art in the Ottoman Imperial Museum; the Raqqa excavations will also be compared with those in Samarra, an important Islamic site and the focus of an early excavation.
THE LEGAL CONTEXT OF THE IMPERIAL MUSEUM EXCAVATIONS

The Ottoman Imperial Museum was established in Istanbul in 1869 as a venue in which to preserve and display within the country antiquities excavated by foreign archaeologists. The first Ottoman state bylaw was quite protectionist: excavations would be possible only with the permission of the Ottoman authorities, with the stipulation that none of the artifacts (except for coins) could be exported. Only the sultan could override these rules. With large shipments of antiquities expected, Hagia Eirene, the former Byzantine church, which was being used as the imperial armory and already housed a collection of antiquities, was selected as a suitable building for the new museum. The first director was Edward Goold, an Irish teacher at the Galatasaray Lycée, between 1869 and 1871. After this brief term, the German art historian and archaeologist Anton Philip Déthier became the Museum’s second director in 1872, remaining in this position, despite an illness, until his death in 1880. During Déthier’s tenure, the first Ottoman antiquities law was enacted, in 1874. Compared to the bylaw, the law itself was less forceful. While the Ottoman authorities continued to grant excavation permits, they agreed to divide the finds equally, among the excavator, the landowner, and the Ottoman government. It is interesting that within five years the Ottoman authorities had backtracked from the more protectionist stance of the bylaw to a more negotiable—but also troublesome—system. It is possible that sending an officer to each excavation that was granted permission and then transporting the finds to Istanbul proved too burdensome for the Ottoman Imperial Museum. During the period in which the bylaw of 1869 and the later law of 1874 were consecutively in effect, several legal foreign excavations were conducted in Ottoman territories, although none were yet done under the auspices of the Imperial Museum itself. After Déthier’s death, the first Ottoman director was appointed to head the Museum: Osman Hamdi Bey (d. 1910), the scion of an educated and influential Ottoman family, was trained as a painter in France and had become a commission member of the Imperial Museum a few years before Déthier’s death. In 1884, during his long tenure as director (1881–1910), a new antiquities law was enacted. Similar in intent to the 1869 bylaw, it placed more restrictions on foreign excavations, allowing only copies of excavated artifacts to be removed from Ottoman territory, rather than the one-third of excavated finds permitted in the 1874 law. All finds were to be given to the Imperial Museum or its local branches. The new law, despite its obvious unpopularity among foreign archaeologists, remained in effect even after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, until it was further modified in 1973. Like the initial bylaw, however, the 1884 law was often less than perfectly followed by foreign archaeologists, and many finds were not sent to the Imperial Museum.

Under the 1869 bylaw and the subsequent antiquities laws of 1874 and 1884, numerous foreign excavations took place in the Ottoman territories of Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Anatolia, mostly of classical or ancient Near Eastern sites. The Ottoman Imperial Museum also conducted its own excavations in eighteen different places—again mainly ancient Near Eastern and classical sites, as well as Hittite ones, along with Raqqa, the only Islamic venue with which the Museum was involved.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

As noted earlier, in the late nineteenth century Raqqa was only a nominal administrative center. An area nearby had been chosen as the new settlement grounds for the Circassian immigrants who arrived by ship at the Eastern Mediterranean port of Iskenderun from the region of present-day Kabardino-Balkaria in Russia to “escape military service, forced religious conversion, and the imposition of the Russian language.” They began arriving in substantial numbers as early as 1885, and especially after 1900. The Ottoman government provided Circassian families with land around Raqqa and permitted them to look for bricks to build their houses. This caused an archaeological disaster and paved the way for the illicit but pervasive unearthing of artifacts. Although local government officials were quick to inform the Imperial Museum about the illegal digging up of artifacts, the responses of the Museum
were neither immediate nor extensive, since messages about similar developments were arriving from various other sites as well, and the Museum had only limited resources and personnel to deal with these matters.20

The Imperial Museum’s 1905–6 campaign at Raqqa took place under the directorship of Theodore Macridy,21 while the one in 1908 was led by Haydar Sümerkan.22 Each of these expeditions lasted a few months. However, the campaign in 1905–6 appears to have been accorded more importance, since it was the first active response of the Ottoman Imperial Museum to a long series of complaints and proposals submitted by local government authorities in Raqqa and Aleppo.

Early Correspondence

The archival documentation from the Imperial Museum shows that as early as 1899 Raqqa had become a focus of interest for smugglers of antiquities. Based on the 1884 antiquities law, confiscated finds were reaching the Imperial Museum.23 By 1906, about 208 confiscated objects had come to the Imperial Museum from Raqqa.24 The Imperial Museum also inventoried a total of 126 objects from its own excavations in Raqqa, although more objects from the excavations may have arrived directly or indirectly, since a large group of ceramic wasters from Raqqa is now in the Karatay Museum in Konya.

We find correspondence regarding the urgent need to conduct excavations in Raqqa as early as 1899.25 According to one such letter, a dealer named Jamil Tabah purchased a bowl, a large jar, and another decorated bowl found in the ruins of Raqqa from the financial officer of Raqqa, Husayn Efendi, for 40 Ottoman lira. These were later sold to a British traveler Jamil Tabah met on a boat from Iskenderun, for 42 lira. Jamil and his brother, Jorji Tabah, whom we also encounter in other archival records from Raqqa, were most likely the art dealers known in the West as Émile and George Tabbagh, who were stationed in Paris and sold Raqqa ceramics on the art market.26 If one considers that the total amount spent by the Ottoman Imperial Museum for the entire 1906 excavation was 150 to 200 liras,27 it becomes clear that 40 lira was an incredibly large sum at that time.

Seven months later, local authorities seized from the same dealer, Jamil Tabah, ten small crates filled with pottery for inspection.28 After they sent a sample of the contents for further evaluation, the Imperial Museum determined that this was old Damascus pottery and worthy of exhibition. Thus, the Imperial Museum requested that the rest of the material seized from Jamil Tabah be confiscated and shipped to Istanbul.29

In short, as ceramics from Raqqa began garnering high prices on the European and American art markets, the local government officers started to inform the higher authorities in Istanbul about the illegal diggings. The Imperial Museum then began to exercise its legal right to confiscate such pieces from the dealers involved. According to the Imperial Museum inventories, a total of 153 objects originating from Raqqa30 entered the Museum in 1900. Most likely they included all or a large part of the items taken from Jamil Tabah, although the Museum inventories do not mention any name.

Letters dating to 1900 show that the houses of other dealers31 were also searched for antiquities, since there were continuous reports of illegal trade in such goods coming from Raqqa.32 On December 4, 1900, an interesting missive was sent to the Imperial Museum from the Directorate of Education of the Province of Aleppo:

The areas within 15 minutes’ walking distance of the government office in town and surrounded with a ruined city wall are full of antique pottery, including colored and figural vases, and similar colored objects. Until now, antique dealers hired several men to dig in this area. This pervasive activity is based on the permission granted by the government to the Circassian refugees33 to look for bricks in the ruins to build houses for themselves. The government asks for a tax of 4 kurus [piastres] on every thousand bricks collected from the site. So far 300 kurus have been collected as tax. Since this leads to the removal of bricks and antiquities from the site, the government is advised to conduct its own excavations to remove the bricks and sell them for at least 30 kurus per thousand bricks (since there is such a demand). The workmen should cost 4,000 to 5,000 kurus. In six months’ time, the total area would be excavated for bricks and in the meantime antiquities would be recovered. The antiquities would then all be sent to the Imperial Museum in crates. An officer from the museum should also be appointed for this purpose. The revenues from the selling of the bricks should cover the cost of the museum
The Imperial Museum appears not to have taken this suggestion into serious consideration, and letters describing the problems of removing the bricks and the smuggling of antiquities continued to be sent from Aleppo at a greater frequency. That same year (1900), a request by the Germans for permission to dig in Raqqā was denied.

In 1902, three crates full of pottery were confiscated and sent to the Imperial Museum. Although the Imperial Museum acknowledged that they were received that July, it was only in 1903 that a group of fifty-two objects from Raqqā was recorded in the Imperial Museum inventories. In 1902, the local authorities again asked for an officer to conduct excavations at Raqqā, and in the spring of 1903 the Imperial Museum agreed to begin excavations by sending an officer. However, by July no one had yet been sent, and on August 1, 1903, the Museum explained that the funds required to conduct excavations were not available in the museum budget that year.

There was also not enough money in 1903 to ship antiquities to Istanbul. As a result, the Imperial Museum suggested that a large decorated stone be kept in the government office in Raqqā, since it could not afford to have it shipped to Istanbul.

A letter sent by the Aleppo director of education, (Mehmed) Nadir Bey, on January 18, 1904, documents explicitly what had been illegally taken from Raqqā: “Among the finds smuggled from Raqqā and then confiscated are a large glazed vase with three handles, with smaller handles in between; a smaller dark-green vase with three handles; a cream-colored vase; a black vase with no handles; a small light-green glazed vase; a small spherical vase; a green vase that was repaired; and several bricks.” Exact matches can be found among the three entries of the Imperial Museum inventories of 1904: inv. nos. 2027, 2028, and 2029 describe, respectively, a jar with six handles (three small and three large), a blue glazed pot with three handles, and a vase with a missing upper part (fig. 1).

In a letter dated April 7, 1904, the director of education of Aleppo warned the Imperial Museum that more gendarme officers would be necessary to protect the site, since there were only three of them. He also reminded the Museum that an excavation officer it had promised to send the previous summer was never actually dispatched, with the excuse that the weather was too hot then for digging. The director of education further noted that it was now spring, the ideal time in which to conduct excavations.

Some amazing information is offered in a letter the Aleppo director of education wrote to the Museum Directorate on May 10, 1904 (fig. 2). In response to an inquiry from the Imperial Museum about the feasibility of appointing a local officer to conduct excavations, the director relayed information gathered by Kazim Efendi, a teacher at the Aleppo high school (mekteb-i idādī) who had been sent to Raqqā a few years earlier for this purpose. According to Kazim Efendi, the area that really needed to be excavated in Raqqā was a shopping district once used by the pottery sellers, an area encompassing about 300 m × 30 m × 2 m (approximately 18,000 cubic meters). It was thought that 3,000 workmen would be needed, at a cost of 4 kuruş each per day, in all 12,000 kuruş. The director suggested that the local government accountant, Mehmed Salim, be appointed to conduct excavations there, at a rate of 60 kuruş per day, in compensation for the time he would spend there under difficult conditions. Each of the four guards who would protect the excavated finds would be paid 300 kuruş, while an additional four gendarme officers would supplement the three already there. The director calculated the total expenses to be between 18,000 and 20,000 kuruş. While acknowledging that this was a large sum, he noted that if the area were not totally excavated, smuggling from the site would continue. The director also said that some of the bricks coming from the pottery sellers’ shops could be sold locally to offset the cost of the excavation. Despite the detailed excavation proposal submitted by the director and the information he included from Kazim Efendi about the pottery sellers’ street, the Imperial Museum postponed the excavations in Raqqā once more in 1904, again due to a shortage of funds: instead of 20,000 kuruş, the Museum could only spare 3,000 kuruş that year.

According to a letter dated June 13, 1904, there were still only three gendarmes protecting the entire site when the dealer Yusuf Jorji Tabah or, more correctly, the previously mentioned George Tabbagh, brother of
Fig. 1. Çinili Köşk inventory registers. Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum, register (deftir) no. II 1454-3057. (Photo: Ayşin Yoltar-Yıldırım, courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum)
Fig. 2. Official letter. Istanbul Archaeological Museum Library, Box 9, 27 Nisan 1320 (May 10, 1904). (Photo: Ayşin Yoltar-Yıldırım, courtesy of the Istanbul Archaeological Museum Library)
Émile Tabbagh, tried to smuggle out valuable antiquities collected there through the Austrian consulate. The officer warned in the letter that if the Museum excavation were to be further delayed, smugglers would continue to excavate the site and nothing would be left for the Museum. As predicted by the officer, Yusuf Jorji Tabah was reported to have gone to Raqqa on July 10, 1904, most likely to acquire antiquities.

In a letter dated May 6, 1905, the Aleppo director of education warned the Imperial Museum that the excavation season was almost over and that smugglers were fast at work. He also complained that dealers were trying to bribe him to ensure his cooperation with them. Between August and November 1905, several letters were sent to report various illegal digs and the urgent need to send an officer to begin excavations in Raqqa. Finally, in mid-November, the Museum officer Theodore Macridy left the excavations in Ayasuluk (Ephesus), arriving at Aleppo in the company of the excavation commissar of Babil (Babylon) on December 5, 1905, to begin legal excavations at Raqqa.

The Macridy excavation of 1905–6

Macridy excavated for about two and a half months and had at his disposal fifty-five day workers. He sent reports by post to the Museum’s administration, as well as several telegrams about the state of the excavations in Raqqa and what was needed to continue work there. There were also three letters that Macridy sent to Halil Edhem, the assistant director of the Imperial Museum as well as the brother of Osman Hamdi, the museum director. These three letters add a great deal to our knowledge of the Imperial Museum’s excavations in Raqqa.

In the first, dated December 27, 1905, we learn that Macridy, joined by Haydar, who must have been the commissar of Babylon mentioned above, made a long and tiring journey, first to Aleppo, where they saw the necessary officials to receive the allocated money for the excavation. Unfortunately, Macridy became ill in Aleppo and had to remain there until December 21st. As soon as he recovered, he embarked, again with Haydar, on another arduous journey to reach Raqqa. The trip was made even more treacherous by the uncommonly frigid temperatures. When they finally arrived in Raqqa, Haydar left via the same route.

In the first days Macridy spent in Raqqa, twenty-five centimeters of snow fell and the Euphrates froze. Macridy complained about the difficult climate in Raqqa, as well as the food there. Describing the modern village as situated to the west of the walled enclosure of the Abbasid city, he explained that the walls were built with unbaked brick but that due to erosion from rainfall they resembled mounds. In the middle of the walled enclosure was a grand mosque with a standing minaret. It was possible to see the arcades of the mosque’s façade; in the middle was a large inscription, part of which was missing. To the southeast were the remains of the palace known as the Kiosk of Harun al-Rashid. Macridy included a sketch in which it is possible to see mihrab-like niches with stalactite forms and mentioned that excavating the ruins in this area would be extremely dangerous. He made note of the Baghdad Gate at the east end of the enclosure wall, remarking that within such walls were ditches dug by clandestine diggers. The entire surface was littered with ceramic fragments and thousands of terracotta cylinders that must have served as supports in the kilns.

Based on his observations, Macridy concluded that Raqqa had been an important center for the production of ceramics. He dug a trench in the eastern section of the walled city, where he also unearthed the foundations of private buildings. In the same place he found 182 Abbasid silver coins stuck together. Other finds included two oenochoes (small jugs or ewers), bowls, plates, a small animal figurine, a lid of a jar, a bronze ring with a bezel-set carnelian and a Kufic inscription, chipped vases, and 20,000 ceramic fragments, most of which were uninscribed. Macridy mentioned huge quantities of ceramics stuck together by a vitrified material that covered them. Since it would have been very costly to take these items to Istanbul, Macridy decided to leave them in situ, while promising to bring a collection of the best fragments to the Museum. Macridy also mentioned the need to conserve the ruins. He was, however, well aware that the illegal diggers would be ready to resume work immediately after his departure. Indeed, everyone at the site was involved in the trafficking of antiquities, including the gendarme, who usually received a small amount of money (bahşiş) in return for
allowing the illegal diggers to pursue their activities. Macridy noted that in order to stop this, the law had to be strictly enforced. He then mentioned budgetary issues regarding expenditures for travel, excavation, and the transfer of objects. In closing his letter, Macridy openly expressed his displeasure with excavating in Raqqā. He said that he would not be able to publish anything but would bring the most valuable pieces to the Museum.

In his second letter, dated January 5, 1906, Macridy mentioned finding some beautiful fragments that he pieced together himself, laying the shards in square grids in the courtyard of the mosque. When he was able to detect parts coming from the same vessel, he immediately put them together with an adhesive called Secotine.62 Apparently preoccupied with this arduous task, he was unable to sleep or eat. Saying that he had never imagined that “Arab art” had reached such perfection, he put together a sample collection that included beautiful fragments with inscriptions. In packaging a portion of the finds, he listed two “krassés,”63 a large green-glazed jar with three handles,64 small bowls, and a fragmented plate with an inscription.65

In his third letter, dated January 19, 1906, Macridy mentioned that he was preparing four crates, with one reserved for fragments and the other three for more presentable objects such as a large basin,66 a container for fruit (fig. 3),67 a drinking cup (fig. 4),68 small bowls, and plates. Macridy did not think he would find any more good pieces, since the entire area had already been worked over by illicit diggers. He also mentioned that once the pottery was unearthed it became friable upon contact with air. Macridy alluded to the beautiful iridescence on the pottery, which unfortunately obscured the design and colors. He also mentioned seven crates from Deir Zor, further along the Euphrates, which, due to having been poorly packed, were badly damaged. He had new crates made, repacked their contents, and sent them to the Museum, along with the inventory register. The finds from Deir Zor were, he said, extremely inferior to the Raqqā pottery:69 they had no inscriptions and were not worth publishing. Macridy concluded his letter by mentioning his interest in the site of Rusafa, another site in Syria.

Fig. 3. Fruit bowl. Istanbul, Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, inv. no. 1579 (formerly Çinili Köşk inv. no. 4004). (Photo: Ayşin Yoltar-Yıldırım, courtesy of the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum)

Fig. 4. Drinking cup. Istanbul, Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, inv. no. 1594 (formerly Çinili Köşk inv. no. 3921). (Photo: Ayşin Yoltar-Yıldırım, courtesy of the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum)
Macridy's letters to Halil Edhem do not continue after January 19, 1906, although he did send official telegrams after this, including three dispatched on January 22, 1906. These provide more data on the excavation, including the total amount required to transport the recent finds from the excavation to Istanbul, which was reported to be at least 30 liras from the site to a boat. Macridy placed whole pieces and less damaged finds in crates, and sent the lists of the contents by post. He left in Raqqa those finds that could not be put together, as well as pieces exceeding a few meters. Macridy stated that the money allotted to conduct excavations would only last twenty more days and requested 5,000 kurus more. In his capacity as an officer of the Museum, Macridy also sold ordinary bricks and marble from Raqqa to raise money for the institution. Macridy was also responsible for collecting the fines illicit diggers paid to the Museum for excavating illegally.

Macridy reported that antiquities arriving from Deir Zor (probably the confiscated pieces mentioned in his letter to Halil Edhem dated January 19, 1906) along with those un-earthed in Raqqa were placed in fifteen crates and shipped to Iskenderun via Aleppo on February 17, 1906. From there the crates were sent by boat to Istanbul on March 6, 1906. Macridy estimated the material excavated from Raqqa to be worth 1,500 lira. According to the Imperial Museum’s inventory registers, thirty-nine items from the Macridy excavations arrived at the Museum in 1906: thirty-six ceramic, two glass, and one metal (fig. 5). The pottery fragments that came in separate crates were not inventoried and their exact whereabouts are unknown to this day. All but one of the thirty-nine objects can now be found in the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum in Istanbul. A few of them are on display (figs. 6 and 7), but several are stored in the museum depots (figs. 3, 4, 8–12). The display information and museum records of several of these objects neither acknowledge Macridy’s excavations by provenance nor distinguish them from the confiscated pieces from Raqqa.

Based on four pieces of kiln furniture that were found in the Macridy excavations and the huge number of scattered terracotta cylinders used as kiln supports mentioned in his letters, it would seem that Macridy was digging in the vicinity of kilns, which, following his description of the excavation in his letter to Halil Edhem, must have been located in the eastern part of the walled city known as Qasr al-Banat. In April 1906, the British consul in Aleppo, Henry Barnham, also reported that the remains of an earthenware factory had been discovered a few years prior, and that earlier that year Macridy had been engaged in collecting specimens of this work. Macridy should have been aware of the pottery sellers’ street reported by Kazim Efendi and mentioned in the letter the director of education wrote to the Museum on May 10, 1904. It is not completely clear whether that street and the kilns were in the same area, but it appears that Macridy missed a great opportunity to bring the best pieces of Raqqa to the Imperial Museum. Instead, the opportunity fell into the hands of dealers, who perhaps conducted digs in the exact place that Kazim Efendi had described.

Sometime after March 1906, perhaps immediately after Macridy left and more Circassian refugees were settled in Raqqa by the Ottoman government in April 1906, a series of huge jars containing approximately sixty well-preserved examples of Raqqa pottery, known collectively as the “Great Find,” were unearthed. As early as 1908, these ceramics were sold on the art market, fetching huge sums of money. In a detailed description of the Great Find given in 1923, the dealer Fahim Kouchakji noted that these pieces were found in the same area that Macridy had excavated, and his explanations matched quite well with Kazim Efendi’s descriptions of the pottery sellers’ street. Kouchakji stated that in the middle of the nineteenth century the Turkish government relocated a hundred (Circassian) colonists from Aleppo and other areas to Raqqa. He dated the “Turkish” (i.e., Ottoman Imperial) Museum excavations to 1903, noting that they took place under thirty feet of soil, in the vicinity of Harun al-Rashid’s palace and also in the same district where the Great Find was made. Scholarship has made clear that Harun al-Rashid’s palace was in fact situated outside the city walls and that the palace once thought to be his was actually the medieval Qasr-al-Banat. But the location of the Imperial Museum excavations was probably near the same place as the Great Find. Although some details in Kouchakji’s description cannot be proven with accuracy, he gives this account of the discovery of the Great Find:
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| Figures: Çinili Köşk inventory registers, Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum, register (defter) no. III. (Photo: Ayşin Yoltar-Yıldırım, courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum)
Fig. 6. Bowl with restored foot. Istanbul, Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, inv. no. 1585 (formerly Çinili Köşk inv. no. 3925). (Photo: Ayşin Yoltar-Yıldırım, courtesy of the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum)

Fig. 7. Drinking glass. Istanbul, Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, inv. no. 2056 (formerly Çinili Köşk, inv. no. 4016). (Photo: Ayşin Yoltar-Yıldırım, courtesy of the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum)

Fig. 8. Flattened bowl. Istanbul, Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, inv. no. 1584 (formerly Çinili Köşk inv. no. 3922). (Photo: Ayşin Yoltar-Yıldırım, courtesy of the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum)

Fig. 9. Fluted footed pot. Istanbul, Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, inv. no. 1592 (formerly Çinili Köşk inv. no. 3932). (Photo: Ayşin Yoltar-Yıldırım, courtesy of the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum)
We came now to the Great Find. It was made by a Circas-
sian, one of a colony transported from its original home
to Er Raqqa. To construct houses, bricks and other mate-
rial were necessary. These the colonists could not buy, so
the Turkish government authorized one of them to dig
among the ruins for his supplies. He started a trench at
what he considered to be the lowest practicable level and
in the vicinity of the old palace of Harun al-Rashid. This
trench led him to the market place, and there in a shop
opening on the ancient scene of trade he came upon a
series of huge jars, each of which contained perfectly
preserved specimens of the finest Er Raqqa pottery. We
may consider these pieces a little later than the palace
ware since the Great Find probably was buried just
before the destruction of the city and its final desertion.87

The market place mentioned above by Kouchakji is
most likely the pottery seller’s street reported by Kazim
Efendi even before 1904. It is hard to understand why
Macridy was not able to find the pottery sellers’ street
or why he did not even directly consult Kazim Efendi,
who knew the exact location. Needless to say, the pieces
unearthed by Macridy do not approach the quality of
the pieces that comprise the Great Find.88

Since illegal digging resumed at the site imme-
diately after the 1906 Macridy excavations,89 the local
authorities tried to convince the Museum to conduct another campaign of excavations, even offering to cover the expenses of the excavations locally.\textsuperscript{90}

In the meantime, more items were confiscated and sent to the Imperial Museum.\textsuperscript{91} Yet no finds from Raqqa entered the Museum’s inventories in 1907; indeed none were entered until a second campaign of excavations was conducted by the Imperial Museum a year later, in 1908.

\begin{quote}
\textit{The excavation of Haydar Bey in 1908}
\end{quote}

That year the local authorities in Aleppo reported more illegal digging by the Circassians,\textsuperscript{92} and more confiscations,\textsuperscript{93} even as they continued to submit more requests for legal excavations.\textsuperscript{94} Finally, in the summer of 1908, the Imperial Museum sent another officer, Haydar Bey, who had assisted Macridy on his journey to Raqqa in late 1905, to begin a second campaign. On August 3, 1908, Haydar Bey began excavations but stopped in late September. From his letter dated September 29, 1908, we learn that he had already placed the finds in crates and was about to send them to Istanbul.\textsuperscript{95} In a telegram dated October 5, 1908, he wrote, “Beyond what has been already sent to the museum, further excavations will most likely not result in any antiquities. Thus, no further funds are necessary.”\textsuperscript{96} This is noteworthy given that only a month earlier he had requested more money to continue the excavations.\textsuperscript{97} It is as though even before the Museum could decide what to do, Haydar Bey had become convinced that further excavations would not yield any more worthwhile results. Yet directly before Haydar Bey’s excavations, jars and vases had been confiscated and sent to the Imperial Museum.\textsuperscript{98} We could perhaps say that Haydar Bey was not as lucky or as informed as the smugglers: he was ready to quit after two months, despondent over the number of illegal diggers who were at work day and night even while he was there.\textsuperscript{99}

By late November, six\textsuperscript{100} crates of Haydar Bey’s finds had been sent to Istanbul via Iskenderun.\textsuperscript{101} The Imperial Museum inventories show that eighty-seven objects were recorded from his excavations in 1908,\textsuperscript{102} more than double the thirty-nine objects from Macridy’s excavations in 1906: the new finds included thirty ceramic objects, as well as five semi-precious stone items, twenty-eight glass items, three bone items, and eighteen metal ones. As with the earlier objects, today most of these have been transferred to the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum in Istanbul,\textsuperscript{103} with a few of the metal objects going to the Ankara Ethnographical Museum. Although Haydar Bey also sent weekly reports,\textsuperscript{104} these have not yet been located in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum Archives. Like the objects from the Macridy excavations, the specific provenances of the finds of the Haydar Bey excavations are not recorded in the present inventories of the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, and no distinction has been made between the excavated finds and the confiscated pieces from Raqqa.\textsuperscript{105}

Such was the history of the two excavation campaigns in Raqqa by the Imperial Museum in 1905–6 and 1908. Even after the excavations, items from Raqqa continued to be confiscated and sent to the Imperial Museum until 1914. One important group of seized objects was related to a prominent family in Aleppo that was involved in the antiquities trade. According to the Imperial Museum inventories, in 1913 twenty-one objects were confiscated from a member of the Marco poli family.\textsuperscript{106} André, Georges, and Vincenzo Marco poli all had positions as consuls of Spain and Portugal in Aleppo for many years in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.\textsuperscript{107} They also sold antiquities there, including Raqqa ware.\textsuperscript{108} Two of the objects confiscated from one of the Marco poli family members are well known and currently on display in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art in Istanbul.\textsuperscript{109}

Further items from Raqqa, all well documented in the archival records, were seized from Max Oppenheim.\textsuperscript{110} Even though Oppenheim had permission to excavate in Tell Halaf, he was accused of having illegally acquired excavated material from Raqqa when he was caught attempting to smuggle eleven crates and five bales of antiquities from the site in 1913.\textsuperscript{111} Archival records show that the crates taken from Oppenheim were not returned and the contents were kept by the Imperial Museum.\textsuperscript{112} Although objects seized from Oppenheim are recorded in the Imperial Museum inventories, these are noted as having entered the Museum in 1912. Therefore, the objects taken from Oppenheim in 1913 can perhaps be linked to a group of Raqqa ceramics now in the Karatay Museum in Konya.\textsuperscript{113}
These Konya objects are inventoried as having come from Aleppo during World War I (1914–18), but how they came from Aleppo to Konya is not explained.\textsuperscript{114} During an interview, the late director of the Karatay Museum, Mehmed Önder, suggested that they had arrived via Istanbul.\textsuperscript{115}

THE DISPLAY OF RAQQQA FINDS IN THE IMPERIAL MUSEUM

Despite having missed chances to acquire more spectacular objects, such as those discovered in the Great Find, the Imperial Museum immediately put on exhibit the objects it received from Raqqa. These were placed in its Islamic gallery, which was established most likely in 1896, since a new publication issued in 1897 included a description of it.\textsuperscript{116} The gallery was a large single room on the second floor of a new museum building completed in 1891, which was designed in a neoclassic style and included classical antiquities on its first floor.\textsuperscript{117}

This permanent gallery devoted solely to Islamic art was, in fact, established before those in Europe and the United States, although several European and American museums had begun collecting Islamic art in the nineteenth century, displaying it among their other collections. At that time a few collections of Islamic art were placed in museums in other Muslim countries. Although a permanent display of Islamic items was established in 1854 in Algiers, it was not until 1897 that a museum built just for those items along with antiquities was created there: this was the Musée national des antiquités algériennes et d’art musulman. Similarly, in Tunisia an Arab collection was inaugurated at the Bardo Museum (Musée Alaouï) in 1899,\textsuperscript{118} while the Cairo Arab Museum was established in 1883. The latter’s first building, used as a museum until 1903, was the Mosque of al-Hakim; however, this setting was far from optimal since the numerous collected objects were heaped together without any sense of selection or order, due to a lack of space, according to the museum director at that time.\textsuperscript{119}

In the first twenty years after the museum was established, objects were acquired from mosques, tombs, and public buildings in Cairo whenever major renovations, restorations, and demolitions took place in the city itself.\textsuperscript{120} The Arab Museum’s new building, which opened in 1903, was constructed and organized with separate rooms and display cases resembling those in European museums.

In 1903 (1319), the Ottoman Imperial Museum issued a guidebook written by Mehmed Vahid\textsuperscript{121} and also used other written media to publicize its display, such as the avant-garde journal \textit{Servet-i Fünun}. In the issue dated March 10, 1904, information was provided on the galleries. There is no author mentioned in the journal and it is most likely that the text was adapted from Vahid’s museum guidebook of 1903, with the addition of recent photos.\textsuperscript{122} The journal depicted the exhibition of items found at Raqqa thusly: “The fourth cabinet displays ceramics found in the vicinity of Raqqa in the province of Aleppo. The decorations and inscriptions on these ceramics merit attention.”\textsuperscript{123} In 1908, all the Islamic artifacts were moved to the Çinili Köşk, which was originally built in 1472 as a highly decorated pavilion in the Timurid style as part of the Topkapı Palace. Between 1880 and 1891 it was used as the main building of the Imperial Museum. When the museum was expanded with additional buildings in 1908, it was decided that the Çinili Köşk would house only the Islamic artifacts of the museum, since the building’s architectural style was deemed more suitable for the Islamic nature of the display. Objects from Raqqa continued to be exhibited there. This time, however, Raqqa ceramics from the Museum’s own excavations must have also been included. Mehmed Vahid, who published the third edition of the Museum’s guidebook in 1909 (1325), more or less repeats the information he gave before in 1903: “Room number six contains pottery that was found in the ruins of Raqqa, in the province of Aleppo. Their colors and unique metallic shine, as well as their decoration and calligraphy, merit attention.”\textsuperscript{124}

Gustave Mendel gave more detailed information in his 1909 article about the Raqqa ceramics of the Imperial Museum,\textsuperscript{125} which he described as consisting of many fragments, including wasters. Despite this, Mendel considered the group important, as it was a large collection with a secure provenance, thanks to the Macridy excavations, which, he said, were concentrated near the kilns. For some reason, he did not mention Haydar Bey’s excavations of 1908, perhaps because the article was prepared before the finds from that campaign reached the Museum.
Although we see that the excavated finds from Raqqa immediately found a place in the Museum’s Islamic gallery, they could not be studied as quickly. In 1907, Osman Hamdi, the director of the Imperial Museum, wanted Yakub Artin Pasha in Cairo to publish the material from the Macridy excavations. An archaeologist of ancient Egypt, Artin Pasha was an influential figure in the establishment of the Cairo Arab Museum in 1883. For unknown reasons, but perhaps due to a lack of expertise in the Islamic field, he did not accept Osman Hamdi’s request and the Raqqa finds were left unpublished. The Raqqa display most likely remained unchanged in the Çinili Köşk. In 1920, the scholar Friedrich Sarre remarked that the results of this Turkish excavation were still on exhibit there but had not been researched. Only in 1938 did a relatively long discussion of the Museum’s Raqqa collection, including the confiscated pieces, appear in the publication of the Çinili Köşk Collection, published in German and Turkish. In this work, Ernst Kühnel included a paragraph about the Raqqa finds in the Museum. Like Mendel, he emphasized the fact that the Museum’s Raqqa collection was acquired through excavation, unlike those in European and American collections. Interestingly, while this is true for two of the three Raqqa objects individually catalogued and photographed in this publication, one of the objects, a ceramic stool, was not an excavated piece but was acquired in 1913. Checking its inventory number (3511) among the Çinili Köşk inventories, we learn that it had been confiscated from Marcopoli.

Beyond these short notes, it is unfortunate that finds from the two excavations were never published or studied at length during the Ottoman period and have continued to be overlooked since the founding of the Turkish Republic. Once the popularity of the Raqqa ceramics waned in the art market in the 1920s there may not have been much impetus left to publish them.

Friedrich Sarre, a self-proclaimed archaeologist who later excavated at Samarra with Ernst Herzfeld, with the permission of the Ottoman Imperial Museum, thought that the excavations of the Imperial Museum in Raqqa were not scientifically conducted. He said that the excavations were limited to searching for and salvaging ceramic fragments, without any consideration of the connection to the existing architectural remains or to the depth of the layer in which objects were found. Although Macridy and Haydar were not university-trained archaeologists, they had gained experience and expertise while working at several excavations conducted by foreigners and the Imperial Museum before commencing their work at Raqqa. Their inability to excavate stratigraphically was most likely due to the disturbed state of the site, which had already been haphazardly dug up by illicit workers. And unlike Samarra, this was not a site that the Imperial Museum had researched and decided to excavate in order to learn about the early and medieval history of the city. In today’s terms, this was a rescue excavation. And given the small allocations that the Museum could contribute and the conditions at the site, the Raqqa excavations were no different than many other excavations of that time. In Raqqa it is perhaps unfortunate that the Great Find was not unearthed during the official excavations, despite the detailed description of this area provided to the Museum by Kazim Efendi. When Sarre led the Samarra excavations, he had Herzfeld as his field director, along with a large group of skilled team members who contributed to the understanding of the site with birds-eye photography and drawings. The Samarra excavation campaigns in 1911 and 1912–13 lasted a total of nineteen and seven months, respectively, with relatively large allocations and workers ranging in numbers of 250 and 300. Conveniently, due to the limited period of settlement at Samarra, Sarre and Herzfeld did not have to bother with stratigraphy in their own excavations. Sarre had wished to excavate Raqqa even before Samarra, and his inability to secure a permit may have been what prompted him to critique the Imperial Museum excavations.

Summing up the various documents discussed above, it becomes clear that although the Imperial Museum did not come up with Raqqa as a specific Islamic site to excavate initially as part of its larger archaeological program, it wanted to respond to the illicit digging early on by conducting its own excavations in Raqqa. However, pressed by financial and logistical concerns, it had to delay its excavations until late 1905, when enough funds, approximately 150 to 200 lira, could be allocated and an officer to direct the excavations assigned. In the mea-
time, while inquiring about the possibility of conducting a less costly dig administered by local officials in 1904, the Imperial Museum acquired very valuable information regarding the ancient pottery seller’s street in Raqqa, from a school teacher who had examined the site on behalf of the Aleppo Directorate of Education. For some reason, Macridy was not able to take advantage of this information when he conducted his excavations in Raqqa between January and March 1906, but the illicit diggers who excavated right after him appear to have used this exact information in April 1906, resulting in the discovery of the Great Find. The excavations of Haydar Bey two years later did not change the luck of the Imperial Museum in terms of spectacular finds. Primarily small objects or kiln wasters were discovered. Despite their quality, however, the finds were deemed important from an archaeological point of view and immediately displayed in the Imperial Museum to garner international scholarly attention. Unfortunately, the results were not published, despite Osman Hamdi’s early efforts. And that remained unrectified throughout the years the objects traveled from the Çinili Köşk to other museums after the establishment of the Turkish Republic. The letters examined above reveal the dire situation confronted by officials of the Ottoman Imperial Museum as well as local authorities in Raqqa and Aleppo during the time of the official excavations in Raqqa: the documents also reflect the attitudes of Museum staff members and various local and international communities toward an Islamic archaeological site in Syria that presented those who wished to excavate it with myriad problems in the early twentieth century.

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NOTES

Author’s note: I wish to thank the Turkish Cultural Foundation, for supporting the continuation of my studies on Raqqa and the Islamic collections of the Ottoman Imperial Museum; the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, for allowing me to study the archival documents, and librarian Havva Koç, for her extensive help; the Topkapı Palace Museum, for allowing me to study the Çinili Köşk inventory registers; the Istanbul Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, for allowing me to study the Raqqa collection; Prof. Edhem Eldem of Boğaziçi University, for sharing his knowledge and kindly offering the transcribed letters of Macridy in his possession; and last, but not least, my father, Fahri Yoltar, for helping me with the Ottoman documents.


8. Milwright, Introduction to Islamic Archaeology, 11.


10. Marilyn Jenkins-Madina’s recent publication, Raqqa Revisited, addressed the excavations in detail for the first time. The talk on which the present article is based, “Excavation of Raqqa by the Ottoman Imperial Museum in the Early 20th Century,” was given at the international conference “Owning the Past: Archaeology and Cultural Patrimony in the Late Ottoman Empire” (February 29–March 1, 2008), organized by Diane Favro, UCLA, and Zeynep Çelik, New Jersey Institute of Technology. The Ottoman Imperial Museum’s own excavations in Raqqa were unfortunately not addressed to any extent in the important and relevant recent publication Scramble for the Past: A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753–1944, ed. Zainab Bahrani, Zeynep Çelik, and Edhem Eldem (Istanbul, 2011), which brings to light mostly foreign involvement in the archaeology of Islamic sites within the Ottoman Empire. In this same volume, Raqqa, the site Sarre once desired to excavate in Mesopotamia, is absent from the list of early Islamic digs before Samarra, which includes digs in Algeria and


The difficulty of this system had been raised in the discussions of 1868 that led to the bylaw. Ibid., 318–319.


Cezar, Sanatçı Bati'ya Açılış, 251.

Ibid., 328–332.

Ibid., 289–311.

Jenkins-Madina, Raqqa Revisited, 24. Here the date of the Circassian settlements is given as 1905.


Documents show that the Imperial Museum officer Theodore Macridy was moving from site to site with no apparent break. See Uğur Cinoğlu, “Türk Arkeolojisinde Theodor Makridi” (MA thesis, Marmara University, 2002), 4.

Macridy signed his name thusly in his French letters; in Ottoman script, he signed his name as Mağrûdî. However, he is also commonly referred to as Maķridî in various publications, especially foreign-language ones. For more information on him, see Aziz Ogan, “Th. Makridi’nin Hatrasasma,” Belleten 5, 17–18 (1941): 163–69; and Edhem Eldem, ed., Osman Hamdi Bey Sözlüğü (Ankara, 2010), s.v. “Theodoros Makridi,” 366–67.

Sümerkan is the last name he took after the passage of the surname law in 1934.

The unpublished Imperial Museum inventories for Islamic objects (known as the Çinili Köşk inventories) include provenance, date of entry into the museum, and a description of each object. The relevant entries for Raqqa were examined in my previous study, Yoltar-Yıldırım, “Ottoman Response,” 214–220.

Inventory nos. 1416–1541 and 1542–68 entered the museum in December 1900, inventory nos. 1932–83 in June 1903, and inventory nos. 2027–29 in April 1904.


Jenkins-Madina, Raqqa Revisited, 17, 120.


Copy of official letter, Istanbul Archeological Museum Library (henceforth IAML), Box 9, 16 Kanunuevvel 1315 (December 28, 1899).

Response to the above letter, IAML, Box 9, 14 Kanunusani 1315 (January 26, 1900).

Response to the above letter, IAML, Box 9, 14 Kanunusani 1315 (January 26, 1900).

The term Maareh as in “Kaza (district) de Rakka et Maareh” is also used in the Imperial Museum registers. The ruins must be within the kazas of both Raqqa and Ma’arra, at least according to the land division in 1899. A copy of the correspondence from the Directorate of Education from Aleppo mentions the ruins within the “kazar of Raqqa and Ma’arra” (copy of official letter numbered 188, IAML, Box 9, 16 Kanunuevvel 1315 [December 28, 1899]).

A dealer in Urfa, his brothers Kosta and Yorgaki, and their uncle (copy of official letter, IAML, Box 9, 12 Teşrinijevel 1316 [October 25, 1900]). A certain Kostaki Homsi was visited by Gertrude Bell in February 1909 at his house in Aleppo, where she saw pieces from Raqqa (Jenkins-Madina, Raqqa Revisited, 28). This could well be the Kosta mentioned in this document; Homsi probably stands for “from Homsi,” a city close to Aleppo.

Official letter, IAML, Box 9, 28 Teşrinisani 1316 (December 11, 1900).

Decree is dated to 13 Kanunusani 1314 (January 25, 1899).

Copy of official letter, IAML, Box 9, 21 Teşrinisani 1316 (December 4, 1900).

Although no name is mentioned in the documents, Sarre and Herzfeld were the likely candidates. Sarre was looking for a site to excavate as early as 1894. Çakır Phillip, “Ernst Herzfeld,” 408n25.

The reason is given as such: “The area the Germans want to excavate in the Raqqa ruins is located near the tribes living in the desert. Thus a squadron of horsemen is needed to protect the Germans from molestation. However, we do not have such power.” See Yoltar-Yıldırım, “Ottoman Response,” doc. 5.

Copy of letter and response, IAML, Box 9, 16 Temmuz 1318 (July 29, 1902).


An officer was requested from the museum to excavate and sell the bricks. The revenues collected would be used to stop the smuggling of antiquities by foreigners. Copy of telegram, IAML, Box 9, 22 Eylül 1318 (October 5, 1902).

Response note, IAML, Box 9, 21 Teşrinijevel 1318 (November 3, 1902).

Official letter, IAML, Box 9, 30 Haziran 1319 (July 13, 1903).

Draft of official letter, IAML, Box 9, 19 Temmuz 1319 (August 1, 1903).

A stone with a cross decoration in relief (100 cm × 80 cm × 8 cm), from Raqqa to the Museum. Official letter, IAML, Box 9, 25 Ağustos 1319 (September 7, 1903).

Copy of official letter, IAML, Box 9, 8 Eylül 1319 (September 21, 1903).

Telegram, IAML, Box 9, 5 Kanunusani 1319 (January 18, 1904).


Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum Registrar, Çinili Köşk Inventory (Defter) II.

Official letter, IAML, Box 9, 25 Mart 1320 (April 7, 1904).

Ibid., 27 Nisan 1320 (May 10, 1904).

Ibid., 31 Mayıs 1320 (June 13, 1904).
51. Yoltar-Yıldırım, "Ottoman Response," 198, doc. 10; also another official letter, IAML, Box 9, 27 Haziran 1320 (July 10, 1904).
52. "I had requested that Salim Efendi be appointed for the excavation, but when we learned that the entire place was going to be excavated by a museum officer, several dealers came to me and attempted to convince me to become involved in the smuggling of valuable antiquities to Europe. They tried to bribe me as well. After receiving a negative answer from me, they are applying to other places. An officer from the museum is desperately needed." Copy of telegram, IAML, Box 9, 23 Nisan 1321 (May 6, 1905).
53. Copy of telegram IAML, Box 9, 27 Temmuz 1321 (August 9, 1905); official letter, IAML, Box 9, 23 Ağustos 1321 (September 5, 1905); letter, IAML, Box 9, 15 Teşrinievvel 1321 (October 28, 1905); telegram, IAML, Box 9, 19 Teşrinievvel 1321 (November 1, 1905); official letter, IAML, Box 9, 24 Teşrinievvel 1321 (November 6, 1905).
54. Telegrams, IAML, Box 9, 18 Teşrinisani 1321 (December 1, 1905), and 25 Teşrinisani 1321 (December 8, 1905).
55. These have not yet been located in the Archaeological Museum Archives.
56. The actual letters, which are written in French, are in the possession of Professor Edhem Eldem. I have worked from Eldem’s transcription of these letters and summarized relevant parts for this study.
57. Inv. no. 4144 is an example of such an object brought to the Imperial Museum by Macridy. See Yoltar-Yıldırım, "Ottoman Response," 215. However, the measurement must have been mistakenly recorded as 59 cm rather than 5.9 cm.
60. No such object is recorded among Macridy’s finds in the Çinili Köşk inventories, but there are a few recorded among the Haydar Bey excavations of 1908. Yoltar-Yıldırım, "Ottoman Response," 214–16.
62. This word was read as "sefotin" in my previous study, and the meaning could not be determined from Macridy’s description: see Yoltar-Yıldırım, "Ottoman Response," 198, doc. 12. In this letter, Macridy makes it clear that this substance was used as a fast-drying adhesive. Seccotine is a refined liquid fish glue that dissolves in water, allowing adhering pieces to be separated easily when necessary.
63. This word is possibly "carafe." Çinili Köşk inv. no. 3928 is an example. See Yoltar-Yıldırım, "Ottoman Response," 214.
64. Ibid., 214. Çinili Köşk inv. no. 4000.
65. Çinili Köşk inv. no. 3927.
66. Çinili Köşk inv. no. 3998.
67. Çinili Köşk inv. no. 4004.
68. Çinili Köşk inv. no. 3921.
69. A ceramic bowl from Deir Zor that came from the Imperial Museum is now in the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum in Istanbul. See Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi, ed. Nazan Ölçer (Istanbul, 2002), 74, inv. no. 1979 (formerly Çinili Köşk inv. no. 4645).
70. Three telegrams, IAML, Box 9, 9 Kanunusani 1321 (January 22, 1906).
71. "The local authorities object to the payment of the fines to the museum. This is unlawful according to the twenty-seventh article of the antiquities law. The province directorate should remind the local government of this. Maqridi": IAML, Box 9, 17 Kanunusani 1321 (January 30, 1906). "The bricks and the marbles from the Raqqa excavations will be sold by Maqridi Bey. The fines that were and will be collected from those who smuggle antiques from the site should also be paid to Maqridi Bey." Letter from Osman Hamdi, IAML, Box 9, 19 Kanunusani 1321 (February 1, 1906).
72. Telegram, IAML, Box 9, 4 Şubat 1321 (February, 17, 1906).
73. Ibid., 13 Şubat 1321 (February 26, 1906).
76. The Çinili Köşk registers do not include any coins, which were inventoried separately.
77. There are uninventoryed crates of mixed pottery in the depots of the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, which the late curator of ceramics, Cihat Soyhan, showed to me, thinking that they might hold some ceramics from Raqqa.
78. Ölçer, Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi, 71, inv. no. 1352 (formerly Çinili Köşk inv. no. 3923); and 74, inv. no. 1591, mistakenly published as having come from Tel Halaf (formerly Çinili Köşk inv. no. 3930).
79. Ölçer, Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi, 70–71, inv. no. 1582 (formerly Çinili Köşk inv. no. 3923 and excavated by Macridy); 74–75, inv. nos. 1591 (formerly Çinili Köşk inv. no. 3930 and excavated by Macridy), 1585 (formerly Çinili Köşk inv. no. 3925 and excavated by Macridy), and 1557 (formerly Çinili Köşk inv. no. 3502 and confiscated from Marcopoli).
80. Yoltar-Yıldırım, "Ottoman Response," 214, object no. 4143. "four roundels serving as platform for firing of vases"; Jenkins-Madina, Raqqa Revisited, figs. 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.
82. Jenkins-Madina, Raqqa Revisited, 23.
83. Better suited to the street grid marked as no. 13 in Baudenk­mäler und Paläste, ed. Verena Daiber and Andrea Becker (Mainz am Rhein, 2004), Karte 3.
85. Jenkins-Madina, Raqqa Revisited, 27n41.
87. Ibid., 524.
88. Jenkins-Madina, Raqqa Revisited, 150–57, MMA (Metropolitan Museum of Art), 35, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42.
89. "Since antiquities continue to be smuggled from the site, an officer from the museum should be appointed to excavate in the spring." Official letter, IAML, Box 9, 6 Kanunuuevvel 1322 (December 19, 1906). Another officer is requested for
further excavations in a copy of a letter, IAML, Box 9, 22 Eylül 1323 (October 5, 1908).

90. "It is understood from the previous excavation of the museum that valuable antiquities can be found in Raqqa. The Aleppo Directorate of Education is able to spare 20,000 kurus to be used for the further excavation of the site. The excavations should be conducted by an appointed officer, under the control of the Aleppo Directorate of Education. If necessary, more funds will be allocated." Copy of a telegram, IAML, Box 9, 3 Nisan 1323 (April 16, 1908).

91. The director of education of Aleppo reports: "Munjayil, the son of Yusuf 'Asfurun, who is a merchant from Aleppo, was reported to have smuggled antiquities, such as a jamb plate, in a crate. The crate was stopped on the railroad. Inside the crate were finds from Raqqa such as vases and cups. These have been sent to the museum. In relation to this, we know that three brothers, Ilyas, Yusuf, and Iskandar, are continuously involved with the smuggling of antiquities. Due to the late notice, we were unable to catch a shipment to Beirut the same morning. If Raqqa is not continuously and seriously excavated, similar smuggling will continue. Also, more funds need to be allocated to those who report to us any smuggling activity." Official letter, IAML, Box 9, 29 Teşrinievvel 1323 (November 11, 1907).

92. "We learned that a few Circassians dug in the ruins for four nights and took out valuable finds and removed them from the site at night by a carriage...if necessary their house will be searched, and if antiquities are found they will be prosecuted...Raqqah Governor": Official decree, IAML, Box 9, 16 Şubat 1323 (February 29, 1908).

93. We learn that nine items from Raqqa were found in the shop of Farjah Vardi (the father of the three brothers named above, Ilyas, Yusuf, and Iskandar). Among them, one brick decorated with a human figure and calligraphy, one black stone with two human figures and calligraphy, one ink bottle, one silver coin, and one copper coin were listed. In addition, two ceramic jars and four rings were confiscated from other individuals (names given) and sent by boat to a crate to the Imperial Museum. Official letter, IAML, Box 9, 5 Mart 1324 (March 18, 1908).

94. Another request was made for a museum officer to conduct another campaign of excavations. Official letter, IAML, Box 9, 18 Şubat 1323 (March 2, 1908).

95. Telegram, IAML, Box 9, 16 Eylül 1324 (September 29, 1908).

96. Telegram, IAML, Box 9, 22 Eylül 1324 (October 5, 1908).


98. Ibid., 200, docs. 17, 18, and 20.

99. Ibid., 201, doc. 22.

100. It must have been written mistakenly as five; other relevant letters indicate six crates. See Yoltar-Yıldırım, "Ottoman Response," 201, doc. 23.

101. Yoltar-Yıldırım, "Ottoman Response," 201–2, doc. 24; also copy of a letter sent from the Museum, IAML, Box 9, 6 Teşrinisani 1324 (November 19, 1908).


103. Ölçer, Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi, 68, inv. no. 1548 (formerly Çinili Köşk inv. no. 3905), 69 (with mistakes in inv. nos. 2273 and 2046, formerly Çinili Köşk inv. nos. 2968 and 2982).


105. Ölçer, Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi, 68 (inv. no. 1547 was confiscated from Marcopoli; inv. no. 1548 excavated by Haydar Bey).

106. In my previous study, I interpreted the letter as "N." However, it is probably "M," signifying a generic Monsieur Marcopoli, without giving the first name. See Yoltar-Yıldırım, "Ottoman Response," 219. Based on Georges Marcopoli's participation in the sale of the "Great Find" pieces, it is likely that these objects were confiscated from him too.


109. Ölçer, Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi, 68, inv. no. 1547:75, inv. no. 1557.


111. Ibid., doc. 41.

112. Ibid., 205–12, docs. 33–47.


114. "Turkish tile-ceramic section:...In addition to these, there are Arab ceramics that were brought from Aleppo during World War I. These include an ordinary and irregular plate, a bowl, a small bowl, and jug-like objects in various shapes and sizes. As they show the development of ceramic-making by the Arabs, they are noteworthy for the history of ceramics." (List of objects in the Konya Asar-i Atika Museum, IAML, Box 112, Dossier 1920, March 18, 1928.


116. Halil Edhem, "Müze-i Hümâyûn," in Tercümân-i Hakikat ve Musavver Servet-i Fünûn = Numéro spécial et unique des journaux Terdjuman-i Hakikat et Servet-i Fünoun, publié aux profits des nécessiteux musulmans de Crète (Istanbul, 1313 [1897–98]), 104–7, esp. 106. The year 1323 has been interpreted by scholars and libraries to be the Hijra year (e.g., Wendy M. K. Shaw, "Islamic Arts in the Ottoman Museum, 1889–1923," Ars Orientalis 30 [2000]: 60), but it is, in fact, in the Rûmi calendar, and therefore should correspond to 1897–98.

117. Scholars have omitted the placement of this gallery from most discussions of the museum, as though Islamic arti-

facts were not exhibited until 1908 in the Çinili Köşk, which was reserved entirely for them. Wendy Shaw quotes the section of the article (which, as mentioned in n. 112, she mistakenly dating to the year 1895 rather than the Rûmi calendar year of 1897) in which the gallery is discussed for the first time but does not draw attention to the location
of the gallery, which she fails to note is in the new building: Shaw, “Islamic Arts,” 60. The Islamic Collection of the Ottoman Imperial Museum, starting from 1883 on, along with displays of Islamic art both in the new Imperial Museum building and the Çinili Köşk, are a focus of my continuing research based on their unpublished inventories. I am thankful to the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University for supporting my studies through an Aga Khan Postdoctoral Fellowship during the 2010–11 academic year.


119. Max Herz, A Descriptive Catalogue of the Objects Exhibited in the National Museum of Arab Art, preceded by a historical sketch of the architecture and industrial arts of the Arabs in Egypt, trans. G. Foster Smith (Cairo, 1907), ix.

120. Max Herz, Catalogue of the National Museum of Arab Art, ed. Stanley Lane-Poole (London, 1896), ix.

121. Meḥmed Vaḥīd, Müze-i Hümāyūn: Rehnümā (Istanbul, 1319 [1903]). Unfortunately a copy of this first issue could not be found in libraries in Turkey, including the Istanbul Archaeological Museum itself, nor in the United States. Therefore, we cannot claim for sure that the Islamic collection was included in this guidebook.

122. “Müze-i Hümāyūn,” Servet-i Fünûn 672 (26 Şubat 1319 [March 10, 1904]): 338–42. The date is in the Rūmī calendar. The journal continued the article in subsequent issues up to no. 676.


131. Sheila Canby, “Islamic Archaeology: By Accident or Design?” in Vernoit, Discovering Islamic Art, 132.
Mughal architecture and gardens are much loved and well studied by historians of South Asia, and the Taj Mahal’s shimmering pool, axial vistas, and majestic domed mausoleum appear in nearly every textbook surveying the history of art. In contrast, little scholarly attention has been bestowed on contemporaneous Rajput sites, built by the Hindu princes of a warrior caste who ruled before and during the Mughal Empire (1526–1857). This is not due to any aesthetic shortcomings or lack of Rajput architectural complexes in India for historians and architects to study: there are beautiful and well-preserved palaces with gardens at Amber, Udaipur, Orchha, Bundi, and Nagaur, among others. The various Rajput kingdoms were largely located in Rajasthan, although they eventually spread to Malwa and Bundelkhand, and to the Punjab Hills and what is today Pakistan (fig. 1). Their palaces are visually stunning and every bit as sophisticated as their Mughal counterparts in their cultural symbolism, political expression, architectural ornament, hydraulic engineering, and artistic innovation. Rajput palace architecture belongs to a broadly defined South Asian visual culture in which many forms were shared by both Mughal and Rajput patrons, although historians of Islamic architecture have generally treated this as an example of cultural influence, in which distinct entities swapped artistic elements and style, rather than the highly complex interweaving that it was.

The purpose of the following exploration of Rajput palace gardens is not to promote an imagined binary that separates Mughal from Rajput forms of art. Most scholars of South Asian art move flexibly between Hindu and Muslim art forms and recognize the futility of trying to distinguish one from the other, especially given the mobility of artists and artistic motifs and the competition among patrons. But scholars who focus on the Islamic world rarely look beyond the Taj Mahal and the Agra Fort to see what sites like Amber, Bundi, and Orchha can tell us about Islamic architecture and particularly landscape. If they did, they would see that the premise of the Islamic garden as an expression of Muslim religious beliefs falls apart when it is applied to Rajput gardens, which often use the same quadripartite form to express entirely different meanings. My point here is not to castigate historians of Islamic architecture, who, admittedly, cover vast world areas, spanning from western China to the Maghreb, and from Central Asia to Mali. Rather, I wish to show that, because of the asymmetrical way various areas of art have been defined—according to religion, ethnicity, geography, dynasty, and language—we often lack a useful framework (or even a concern) for areas of significant cultural overlap and complexity like mudéjar Spain, Coptic Egypt, and Hindu South Asia. I will focus primarily on palace garden architecture, although buildings and painting must also be considered.

One exception to the general blindness to Rajput architecture is the palace at Amber Fort (fig. 2). The Amber Fort was built by Raja Man Singh (r. 1590–1615), a Rajput ruler of the Kachhwaha clan and one of the highest-ranking officials in the Mughal court, on a mountain in the Aravalli range (about 14 kilometers from the site where, in 1727, Jaipur would be founded). Rectangular in plan, it was built in successive stages and was significantly extended during the reign of Mirza Raja Jai Singh I (r. 1623–67/8), who built an outer reception courtyard as well as a handsome inner courtyard to serve as his own quarters. This inner court closely matches Mughal models, with a central garden divided
Fig. 1. Map of the Indian subcontinent, showing the boundaries of the Rajput kingdoms (seventeenth century). (Map: C. Scott Walker, Harvard Map Collection, Harvard College Library)

Fig. 2. Amber Fort, plan of Raja’s court, 1623–68. (Plan: D. Fairchild Ruggles and Binaifer Variava)
into quadrants and subdivided by a stellar geometry into smaller sunken beds crisscrossed by narrow raised walkways (fig. 3). The garden court is flanked on either side by the elaborately ornamented pavilions of Sukh Nivas (to the west) and Jai Mandir (to the east), which open towards it through columnar arcades and raised terraces. Following the typology of the classic Mughal waterfront garden complexes at Agra and Lahore (the Delhi Fort had not yet been constructed), the palace had an elevated position on a hilltop overlooking an artificial lake.

In Mughal fashion, water was prominently and dynamically displayed: from the Sukh Nivas and Jai Mandir pavilions, water cascaded over a *chādar* (chute) and a panel of *chīnī khāna* (tiered niches) to flow through white marble channels towards the central pool, which took the shape of an eight-pointed star. On the edge of the manmade Maota Lake below, the Maunbari Bagh, also known as the Kesar Kyari, similarly adhered to the geometrical formalism of the cross-axial four-part garden, commonly called a *chahār bāgh*. The garden is laid out symmetrically, with dominant central axes connecting the stepped levels of the ground plane (fig. 4). The precise date of this garden is unknown, but it was built before 1711, when it appears on a cloth map of Amber, and probably after the Mughals’ surge of garden building in Kashmir, which ended in the mid-seventeenth century. The downward cascade of the
Maunabari Bagh’s terraces and the dramatic panoramic views of the surrounding landscape owe a clear debt to the Mughal garden estates of Kashmir to the north. There, the Nishat Bagh (1625) and Shalamar Bagh (1619–20), both built on the shores of Lake Dal in Srinagar, mediated in tiered levels between the high snow-capped mountains and the silvery lake, their central water channels forming powerful axes that stretched the chahār bāgh from a centralizing plan into a linear series with pronounced directionality (fig. 5).\(^5\) On the north bank of Amber’s lake, a second garden, the early eighteenth-century Dilaram Bagh, likewise followed a quadripartite plan with four pavilions.\(^6\) In all three of the Amber Fort gardens, the legacy of the Islamic chahār bāgh is evident, a distinctly Mughal contribution to South Asian garden forms.

Elsewhere, Rajput patrons departed from Mughal modes. At Orchha, the capital of the Rajput state of Bundelkhand from 1531 to 1783, the principal palace garden followed neither the classic model of the chahār bāgh nor the stepped linear model of Kashmir. Orchha’s Jahanangiri Mahal, begun in 1605 and finished circa 1619 by Bir Singh Dev, occupies the highest point of an island formed by the natural bend of the Betwa River and an artificially enhanced moat, in both size and altitude eclipsing the older Raj Mahal built by his father. At the foot of these two palaces stands the Rai Praveen Mahal, an airy two-storied garden pavilion with rooftop terrace (fig. 6). The pavilion and its garden served as the residence of the consort of Indramani (r. 1672–75), named Rai Praveen, but it is not absolutely clear whether it was built by that patron or earlier, by Bir Singh Deo (r. 1605–27), who had built the Jahangiri Mahal. In his recent study of Orchha, Edward Rothfarb speculates that the pavilion and garden may have replaced an earlier garden, and indeed such rebuilding—especially of gardens—was not uncommon.\(^7\) The Rai Praveen Mahal overlooks the large Anand Mahal Bagh, a garden divided into two halves, each enclosed by high walls (figs. 7 and 8).\(^8\) The dominant axial path that runs from the main pavilion to a diminutive one set against the north wall suggests bilateral symmetry, but in fact neither the enclosures nor the organization of walkways and plants within them is symmetrical. Instead of division into halves or quadrants, the garden follows a gridded system in which the planting is confined to relatively small, sunken octagonal cavities (approximately 1.5 meters in diameter) in a packed-mortar horizontal surface (fig. 9). The cavities today hold tall slender Ashoka trees and more broadly canopied Orange Jasmine (*murraya paniculata*), giving the effect of an orchard. The present trees have only recently been planted,\(^9\) but in the seventeenth century the area was also probably arranged as an orchard garden, although more likely with small fruit trees. Rather crudely built conduits running across the mortar surface supply the garden with water.

This preference for planting in pits excavated in a hard surface is not unique to Orchha; it is also seen at Ahhichatragarh Fort at Nagaur (Rajasthan) and the City Palace of Udaipur. The garden in the City Palace’s Amar...
Vilas courtyard (1698–1710) is laid out neither as a strictly cross-axial chahār bāgh nor as a linear Kashmiri type with stepped esplanades. Instead, the courtyard is divided into a grid with a square pool in its center (fig. 10). Surrounding this, each square of the grid is further divided into nine small, individual pockets excavated from an otherwise hard surface. These are filled with flowering plants and shady trees.10

At the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Rajput Ahhichatragarh Fort at Nagaur, a palace with elegant halls and gardens stands within an enclosure of high, fortified walls.11 The palace is divided between the women’s quarters (zenāna) on the western side (a rabbit’s warren of small residential units arrayed around an oblong courtyard, simplified as generic blocks on the axonometric view) and the more open and expansive public halls to the east (fig. 11). Moving from the western
Fig. 9. Orchha, Anand Mahal Bagh, planting detail. (Photo: D. Fairchild Ruggles)

Fig. 10. Udaipur, City Palace, Amar Vilas courtyard, 1698–1710. (Photo: courtesy of Jennifer Joffee)
also stores water in small rooftop tanks and, when necessary, lifts it up from a cistern in the garden below via a bucket and chain mechanism. When the rooftop tanks hold sufficient quantities, the water can be slowly released to flow down the surface of a nearly vertical chādar in the hall’s interior below (fig. 14). The water from this inspired ornamental display flows from the Abha Mahal out into the open area of gardens or orchards that fills the eastern portion of the palace enclosure. In the desert environment of Nagaur, where slightly less than 4 centimeters of rain falls annually, and where there are no lakes, rivers, or streams nearby, water is not wasted and its presence is admired.

The garden that fills the large oblong courtyard between the Main Baradari and the Jal Mahal tank merits closer attention because it is highly unusual. Instead of deep beds of earth filled with vegetation, as in a typical Mughal garden, the quadrants that are divided by the four water channels form a shallow depression of hard-packed mortar. In the surface of each are pits approximately deep enough for the root ball of a shrub (fig. 15). Water conduits run between these pits below
Fig. 12. Nagaur Fort, Sheesh Mahal’s *chahār bāgh*, seventeenth century. (Photo: D. Fairchild Ruggles)

Fig. 13. Nagaur Fort, main courtyard: a large rectangular pool is in the lower left-hand corner, the lotus garden is beyond the small *bangla*-roofed kiosk, and the square *bāradarī* is in the upper right. (Photo: D. Fairchild Ruggles)
trees that rose above the ground plane, but more likely it was a type of low vegetation that spilled beyond the edges of the cavity. If this had been a water-thirsty species that could not tolerate drought, the container method and its sub-surface piping would have preserved moisture and facilitated irrigation; but if, as some scholars believe, the pits were filled with water and planted with lotuses or water lilies, the slightly sunken quadrants may have been designed to fill with water after the rains, flooding to a level slightly higher than the pits and covering the flat mortar surface with a thin silvery film. It would have been a seasonal event—but gardens are always characterized by such ephemeral moments of exceptional beauty. The "lotus pools" had an intermediary position between the Main Baradari's enormous pool and the large Jal Mahal tank, and the effect of viewing all three bodies of water at once must have been spectacular. In the dry season, only the pits themselves would have held water. With either the abundance or scarcity of water, and whether potted with low shrubs or afloat with lotuses, the vegetation

Fig. 14. Nagaur Fort, Abha Mahal, chādar. (Photo: D. Fairchild Ruggles)

the surface of the mortar paving, forming an interconnected system for irrigation in which evaporation would have been minimized. Such underground channelization would have been advantageous in arid Nagaur. The pits could have been planted with shrubs or small fruit

Fig. 15. Nagaur Fort, detail showing the Lotus garden. (Photo: D. Fairchild Ruggles)
incorporated into the women’s quarters. If so, the pool may have been a later addition, providing the women with a private place to swim, as seen in Rajput miniature paintings and murals in which women are shown bathing and cavorting in such pools. The typological source for this kind of enclosed courtyard with tank appears to lie within Indic domestic tradition because there is evidence for such galleried tanks in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries at the city of Vijayanagara (Hampi) (in the south), as, for example, in the so-called Queen’s Bath. Although the Deccan plateau in the peninsular south was far from the northeastern desert where Nagaur was located, there seems to have been an awareness, and even exchanges, between the courts of northern and southern India. Therefore, when analyzing artistic exchanges, it is not only the relationship between the Mughals and Rajputs that must be considered, but also relations among the Rajput kingdoms, as well as between the Rajputs and other Hindu kingdoms.

These gardens and courtyards provoke typological questions that force us to reexamine the prevalence of the Mughal aesthetic and to ask whether there were, in

would have spilled beyond the confines of the cavities, forming islands of colorful blooms and green foliage. The display could have been enjoyed from any of the surrounding pavilions, but it would have been especially impressive in the two diminutive kiosks, which may have given the illusion that they were poised between two seas of water.

A second form at Nagaur that eludes the Mughal typology is that of the courtyard with the large tank enclosed by walls and fronted by hypostyle pavilions, as exemplified by the Jal Mahal tank and the smaller tank in the Sheesh Mahal ensemble. The Sheesh Mahal tank is enclosed by an arcade that extends from the pavilion itself, and the pool serves in place of an interior courtyard (fig. 16). The interpretation of this courtyard is complicated by the historic sequence of architectural change and augmentation in the Fort. The Sheesh Mahal has interior wall paintings that closely match a similar mural program in the Hadi Rani Mahal, which lies on the same north-south axis and belonged to the women’s quarters of the palace. This correspondence suggests that the Sheesh Mahal was at some point incorporated into the women's quarters. If so, the pool may have been a later addition, providing the women with a private place to swim, as seen in Rajput miniature paintings and murals in which women are shown bathing and cavorting in such pools. The typological source for this kind of enclosed courtyard with tank appears to lie within Indic domestic tradition because there is evidence for such galleried tanks in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries at the city of Vijayanagara (Hampi) (in the south), as, for example, in the so-called Queen’s Bath. Although the Deccan plateau in the peninsular south was far from the northeastern desert where Nagaur was located, there seems to have been an awareness, and even exchanges, between the courts of northern and southern India. Therefore, when analyzing artistic exchanges, it is not only the relationship between the Mughals and Rajputs that must be considered, but also relations among the Rajput kingdoms, as well as between the Rajputs and other Hindu kingdoms.

These gardens and courtyards provoke typological questions that force us to reexamine the prevalence of the Mughal aesthetic and to ask whether there were, in
fact, not only multiple Mughal types but also a repertoire of alternative types that developed within a Rajput (as well as broader South Asian) context. However, to do this we must first acknowledge the existence of an architectural category—the “Rajput Garden” (in which are included courtyards and tanks)—that exists together with its Mughal counterpart, and second, we must recognize that, as tools for political and cultural expression, the built works of the Rajputs followed different strategies and may have had different goals.

Considerable scholarly study has been given to the history, motivations, and meanings of the palaces and gardens of the Mughals. This is in remarkable contrast to the situation with the built works of their contemporaries, even though Rajput palaces and gardens attract tourism and are strikingly photogenic. There are many possible explanations for this omission from histories of culture and art. One is that the textual sources are invariably more numerous for imperial rulers than for regional dynasts, and while many of the Rajput rulers were powerful and proved to be formidable foes in resisting Mughal conquest, none of them ever attained the territorial breadth that the Mughals had won by the end of Akbar’s reign in 1605. Nonetheless, there exist dynastic histories and historical poems written for Rajput rulers that, while not chronicles in the Mughal sense, are historically revealing. Furthermore, there are architectural inscriptions and archival records of individual Rajput houses that document household expenditures, temple donations, and social protocol, and provide an economic description of the province. Such texts could have been read by British officials, many of whom were linguistically well trained, but if the texts were read or translated, they were rarely published and thus did not reach a wide audience. There were accounts written by English historians as well: James Tod’s lengthy *Annals* (1829–32) provided a detailed, entertaining, and factually reliable history (although colored by biased interpretation) of the Hindu rulers of Rajasthan. These works ought to have generated interest in the Rajputs, but in actuality their impact was limited. This may have been due to contemporary circumstances: whereas the Rajputs were politically active and thus still able to control their own histories, the formerly powerful Mughals had been defeated.

The Mughal imperial histories, while not necessarily more numerous, were for the most part available in translation throughout the twentieth century, due to the keen interest of British historians in the great empire they had colonized, which they could not help but see in terms of their own imperial ambitions, as well as to the nature of the texts themselves. As Allison Busch has explained, the Mughals preferred a kind of historical writing that was recognizable to Europeans as a chronicle, whereas the Rajputs wrote about history differently, through poems and writings that revealed historical values rather than a straightforward sequence of events. In consequence of these biases, there were far more translations of Mughal dynastic histories than Rajput histories, and the Mughals became more widely known at both the scholarly and popular level. The greatest Mughal histories were the *Baburnāma* (the memoirs of Emperor Babur [r. 1526–30], first translated in 1826), *Akbarnāma* (the history of Emperor Akbar and his reign [1556–1605], translated beginning in 1868), and *Jahangirnāma* (the history of Emperor Jahangir and his reign [1605–27], translated beginning in 1909). But while the translations may have made Mughal history available to a wide audience, the fact that such works were translated and published is a reflection—not a cause—of an already deep fascination with the Mughals on the part of British historians and empire-builders.

The scarcity and lack of translated sources on the Rajputs do not entirely explain the imbalance in the scholarship. Because there were a great many Rajput dynastic houses that coexisted with the Mughals, serving variously as allies or foes, there are many more Rajput forts and palaces than Mughal ones. Here the imbalance would seem to favor the Rajputs, suggesting that there ought to be a great many more publications on Rajput palaces and their gardens than on Mughal residential architecture of the same period. But this is not the case. While in recent years scholarly and handsomely illustrated publications have appeared focusing on regional capitals, the classic survey works on Rajput palaces continue to be those of Oscar Reuther (1925), Giles Tillotson (1987), and George Michell (1994). Historians of South Asian landscape are grateful to have serious studies of Rajput palace architecture, but while architectural publications often include plans that indicate the presence of courtyard gardens as an element
of the built form, they rarely extend beyond the formal to address the iconography, specific plantings, water systems, and climatic conditions that are key aspects of garden design. Moreover, the field of Rajput architectural study is still small enough that palatine sites such as the Nagaur Fort are generally unknown. In general, while Mughal palaces receive serious scholarly analysis, Rajput palaces are dismissed as merely scenic.21

There are reasons for this. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Mughal forts were empty and could be coopted by the British for both use (as occurred in Delhi) and study; Rajput palaces, on the other hand, were inhabited by their princely families (and many still are). Even when the Rajput owners chose to live elsewhere, outsiders were not typically allowed into their empty palaces. Thus, the architecture was more likely to be viewed in that superficial scenic sense, rather than understood as a result of serious methodical study. Until Independence in 1947, the art and architectural history of South Asia was written mostly by British rather than Indian scholars, and the former often looked at form without inquiring further, emphasizing classification and ignoring (or not having access to) the texts that could have provided the social context for the material culture and explain the original meaning of the architecture. The outstanding exception to this was Ananda Coomaraswamy (d. 1947), who served as curator of Indian art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts from 1916 until his death.22

Even the architecture of the Mughals, one of the three great Muslim empires, is sometimes relegated to the margins of Islamic architectural history.23 Because the emphasis has historically been placed on the central Islamic lands, the Sultanate and Mughal eras in South Asia have been treated as Ghaznavid and Timurid spin-offs, whose architecture can only be explained through reference to more central, mainstream precedents.24 Ernst Kühnel began the short Mughal chapter in his 1962 survey by acknowledging this tendency to explain Mughal art solely in terms of derivation from Persian precedents. Kühnel allowed for the originality of the Mughal artists but seemed to take it for granted that “an unadulterated Indian-Muhammadan style” could be differentiated from the “pure Hindu stream.”25

In the more recent Pelican History of Art series, where the second of the two volumes on Islamic art covers South Asia from the Sultanate through the Mughal periods, the authors are sensitive to the eclectic nature of Islamic art in South Asia, but the specific examples of Indic ornament and Hindu temples to which comparisons would logically be drawn are relegated by the Pelican’s overarching serial structure to a separate volume on Indian art.26 A similar division occurred in Stokstad’s Art History (to which I contributed), where Islamic and South Asian art comprised separate chapters.27 Worse, although David Talbot Rice’s Islamic Art (published in 1965, and revised in 1975) and Robert Hillenbrand’s Islamic Art and Architecture (1999) purported to be comprehensive, they ignored South Asian Islam entirely.28

In history writing, the Mughals suffer sometimes by being excluded from the rest of the Islamic world and at other times by being included in Islam but separated from other South Asian artistic traditions.

Within art history, the most cogent explanation for why most historians have paid little or no attention to Rajput gardens and palace architecture is that while the Mughals occupy a niche in the broad history of Islamic architecture, and Hindu temple architecture and city planning occupy their own niche in South Asian studies, the Rajputs straddle the two. Their religious affiliation and worldview were Hindu,29 and yet they adopted many of the outward signs associated with the Mughals. Although Hindus constituted a demographic majority within the Mughal Empire, historians outside of India have typically treated them as a subcategory in a time and place generally categorized as Islamic.30

A similar observation can be made with respect to manuscript painting, where Rajput paintings have generally received less attention from art historians than Mughal paintings, largely because they were regarded as a deviation from a centralized courtly tradition, according to a model that defined artistic relationships as those inevitably between an influencer, who is seen as actively creative, and the one so influenced, who passively receives artistic forms and ideas from a position of inferiority.31 It is true that court painters who served Rajput patrons employed many of the same craft techniques, media, and themes as their contemporaries working for Mughal patrons, and many of them appear to have been trained by artists working for the Mughal
Regarding the patronage of the Mughal emperor Jahangir, Milo Beach notes, "Jahangir's great Album contains Mughal, Deccani, Persian, and European works (both prints and paintings by European artists), and Jahangir was famous for his cosmopolitan interests. But nowhere does he even acknowledge any tradition of painting in Rajasthan, despite the fact that a Rajput noble such as Raja Man Singh (who held the highest rank in the Mughal administration) was decorating his spaces in Rajput style back home in Amber." The rejection was surely because of the prevalence of Hindu religious themes among Rajput court workshops, but it may also have been because of the different ways that Hindu artists chose to represent narrative. Instead of a realistic picture of plausible events, as in Mughal painting, Hindu painters invited their viewers into a visual world represented in multiple moments in time, in multiple places, and even in two worlds (the human and the divine).

Rajput and Mughal painting traditions responded to each other over the course of three hundred years (and Hindu princes competed not only with Mughals but also among themselves). It was not only the artists who were adept at moving among visual modes: Rajput patrons themselves freely commissioned painters working in either Mughalizing or distinctly Rajput idioms, as was the case among the Kachhwahas of Amber. Despite significant overlap among the style, technique, and artists who moved from court to court, Rajput painting is less well known than Mughal painting. Nonetheless, it has received more study than Rajput architecture, in part due to the art market. A number of collections of Rajput manuscript paintings came up for sale in the mid-twentieth century, spurring collectors and connoisseurs to treat them as something other than Mughal derivatives. Study and classification were ways to make them more marketable. Additionally, art history’s high regard for the artists themselves prompts analysis of the hand of individual artists, whereas in the more collaborative endeavor of architecture, the hand of the master workman can rarely be identified—just the traditional practices of artisanal workshops.
The fact that the Rajputs do not fit neatly into either the Muslim or the Hindu category of architecture as framed by the international canon of South Asian visual studies is a methodological problem. Rajput patrons are rarely included in studies of Mughal architecture, although many of them were full participants in Mughal culture and the military and administrative construction of the empire. To take one example, the Rajput Kachhwaha rulers of Amber served as high-ranking members of the Mughal administration and married their daughters to Mughal emperors so that they eventually became enmeshed in the Mughal dynastic line. As described above, their palace at Amber has an enclosed courtyard with white pavilions that look outward toward the dramatic exterior landscape in one direction and open inward, through delicate arches, onto the central garden. The quadripartite garden consists of sunken beds traversed by a geometrical array of walkways and water channels, flowing from a chādar and chīnī khāna (fig. 3). It has all the attributes of a Mughal garden. Similarly at Bundi (Rajasthan), the palace of the Chauhan Rajputs has a large garden terrace (probably eighteenth century) that forms a chahār bāgh with a central water pool (fig. 18). However, despite their clearly Islamicate form and planning, Amber and Bundi are omitted from surveys of Islamic architecture and, less surprisingly, introductions to world art history. Their cultural hybridity disqualifies them from histories that identify linear chronological development within a well-defined context. These are problems that occur not for reasons intrinsic to the works themselves but because of the way that geographical and historical areas have been defined.

“Hybridity” itself is a problematic term because it begs the questions of identity and agency. It assumes that there were original identities—stable and clearly bounded—that interacted to form a hybridized union while ignoring imbalances of power such as relations of dependency due to conquest, economic forces, and gender inequalities that may have caused or given meaning to the union. But the stability of those human identities is by no means as clear as the differentiating terms Rajput and Mughal would suggest. The Mughals themselves were produced by the coupling of Mughal fathers with Rajput mothers, both of whom were themselves produced through sexual union—by nature, a commingling of difference—in which there is no absolute, stable identity, only a constant coming into being.40 This is not to say that the clans lacked identity and were indistinguishable. By their visible worshipping at mosques and temples, the difference in their burial rites, the celebration of different holy days, and the markings made on the body itself, they created external signs that insisted on distinct identities. It is in the act of making (always in the process), rather than in being (denoting something complete), that people perform their cultural identities. The making of things and shaping of spaces are thus critical.
The term “hybridity” does not disclose the extent to which formal typology was associated with identity: it does not explain why and under what conditions typological forms were exchanged between the Mughals and Rajputs. The question has been addressed by architectural historians, who have called attention to the indigenous roots of forms such as the distinctively curving bangla roof (so-called for its Bengali origins), chhatrī (a cupola raised on slender supports), corbelled arch, serpentine bracket, and rooftop terrace, as well as the locally quarried red sandstone used in Hindu palace architecture and, subsequently, in imperial Mughal monuments. From the perspective of the twenty-first century it may be easy to attribute the bangla and chhatrī to Indic origins and the chahār bāgh and hesht behesht (a square or octagonal shape divided into nine bays) plan to Muslim (and specifically Timurid) sources. Historians make these distinctions for the reasons explained above, but did patrons in the seventeenth century understand them according to such culturally specific Rajput/Mughal or Hindu/Muslim binaries? Would they, for example, have regarded the exquisitely carved and pierced stone screen (jālī) at the Tomb of Sheikh Salim al-Din Chisti (tomb built 1581–82, jālī screens added ca. 1605) (fig. 19), in the Mosque of Fatehpur-Sikri, as derived from Hindu temple architecture, with origins at least as early as the seventh-century temple at Aihole? Or would they have associated it with the ceramic screens filling the windows of Timurid and Safavid architecture of Iran? They could have found the immediate source in fifteenth-century Sultanate mosques in India, and with such a history of commingling already permeating the subcontinent well before the beginning of the Mughal Empire in 1526, perhaps they would have refused to imagine a binary set of paths by which such an element had to have arrived in Fatehpur-Sikri through either Muslim or Hindu carriers. “Hybridity” also does not clarify the degree to which architectural forms were simply interchangeable signs that could be appropriated or shed for political expedience. Just as the Mughals were quick to borrow beautiful forms and employ the structural techniques and

Fig. 18. Bundi, Chitra Shali Palace garden, eighteenth century. (Photo: D. Fairchild Ruggles)
talented Hindu and Muslim artists of the Indic region that they conquered, the Hindus appear to have also embraced the arts, forms of dress, and other cultural signs associated with the Mughals. They adopted and adapted forms with freedom but also selectivity. Because the artistic syntax and meanings were different from their own art, the appropriation was not a direct transfer but a reworking and renegotiation of form and expression. However, paradoxically, while historians have celebrated the cultural eclecticism of the Mughals as a source of strength, by which the strands of smaller kingdoms were strategically woven into the larger Mughal imperial fabric, this same eclecticism among the Rajputs has caused them to be excluded from the international canon of South Asian visual studies.

If it is difficult to classify the various schools of Rajput painting and explain their various relationships to the Mughal workshops, and to find a way of discussing Rajput architecture that does not insist upon assigning it to either a Muslim or Hindu context, the problems only increase with landscape because the matter of cultural identification is exacerbated by a disciplinary one. For many landscape historians, especially those trained in the discipline of art history, the analytical apparatus of architectural history provides the starting point for landscape studies. Indeed, two of the best books on Rajput architecture—those of Tillotson and Michell—are useful studies of the evolution of architectural typology, patronage and regional style, and the dynastic expression of power and legitimacy, but as they were written with the intent of explaining the buildings, other aspects of palatine architecture, such as furnishings, murals, and gardens, appear only as a subset. This is often the case in histories written from the architectural perspective: gardens appear as secondary dependencies, designed and inserted into the palatine environment after the construction of the major buildings, even though the material evidence contradicts this imagined sequence. The Tomb of Humayun (New Delhi, finished 1572) (fig. 20) and the Nagaur Fort, to give two examples, were constructed with water channels and spouts embedded in their roofs and terrace floors, which were designed to collect precious rainwater and direct it into irrigation cisterns. The water catchment of the main buildings contributed to the functioning of the irrigation system of the whole complex, but it also became a powerful visual effect, as the water thus captured was then displayed in the large rectangular pool at Nagaur Fort and in the grid of water channels and pools running through the garden of Humayun’s Tomb. These were not afterthoughts, added after the completion of the architecture in response to the gardener’s sudden demand for adequate water supplies. The gardens were conceived in tandem with the buildings.

But the weight of architectural history is such that landscape historians often consciously or unconsciously adopt the values of the architectural historian, examin-
den meaning can depart from the rigidly unilateral theological explanation, which in the field of Islamic gardens usually takes the familiar form of the garden being a foretaste of the paradise promised in the Koran to the faithful, and the *chahār bāgh* as an earthly reflection of the four rivers of paradise. Humayun’s Tomb garden often provokes such an interpretation. The Persianate tomb is characterized by a *hesht behesht* plan, monumental central double-shell dome, and iwans rendered on the façade at various scales (fig. 21). It stands majestically within a *chahār bāgh* garden that, given the commemorative and funerary purpose of the site, was certainly intended to connote “paradise on earth.” Of course, any Muslim tomb garden built during or after the Timurid dynasty (1370–1506) had paradisiac meaning—by then it was so ubiquitous as to be a cliché. However, the political motivations underlying the construction of Humayun’s tomb and garden were by no means so commonplace and generalized: the site

Fig. 21. New Delhi, Tomb of Humayun. (Photo: D. Fairchild Ruggles)

ing gardens with an eye to the identification of typologies (such as the *chahār bāgh*), artisanal technique (such as cut-stone channels and carved marble basins), and patronage (categorized as either Mughal or Rajput, but not both). They focus on permanent elements such as walkways and fountains, and often do not even attempt to answer the question of the character of the garden that was planted. They view gardens as stable categories with well-defined forms, created by an architect according to a plan and having a distinct moment of origin. This is as reductive as the way that historians treat cultural identities.

However, it is possible to conceive of gardens in entirely different terms: not as grand manipulations of the built environment reflecting deep-seated religious beliefs and centralized governmental control, but as, first, local responses to the climate, soil, and topography and, second, expressions of diverse political and cultural identities. Considered thus, the question of garden meaning can depart from the rigidly unilateral theological explanation, which in the field of Islamic gardens usually takes the familiar form of the garden being a foretaste of the paradise promised in the Koran to the faithful, and the *chahār bāgh* as an earthly reflection of the four rivers of paradise. Humayun’s Tomb garden often provokes such an interpretation. The Persianate tomb is characterized by a *hesht behesht* plan, monumental central double-shell dome, and iwans rendered on the façade at various scales (fig. 21). It stands majestically within a *chahār bāgh* garden that, given the commemorative and funerary purpose of the site, was certainly intended to connote “paradise on earth.” Of course, any Muslim tomb garden built during or after the Timurid dynasty (1370–1506) had paradisiac meaning—by then it was so ubiquitous as to be a cliché. However, the political motivations underlying the construction of Humayun’s tomb and garden were by no means so commonplace and generalized: the site
was intended to express a specific set of meanings that would link the Mughals to their Timurid forebears and thus confer authority and legitimacy upon Humayun’s son Akbar, who (possibly together with Humayun’s widow) had built the tomb as much to honor his deceased father as to assert Humayun, and by extension himself, as the rightful ruler of the nascent Mughal Empire. This political meaning is a more probing explanation than the more obvious paradisiac explanation of the garden because it requires an examination of the particular motivations of the patron, the political conditions of the moment, and the specific cultural conditions of the audiences.

If the symbolism of Islamic gardens can be attributed to a complex array of economic and political as well as environmental concerns, it is especially important for the interpretation of Rajput gardens, since the interpretation of the latter as reflections of paradise simply does not serve. When used in a Rajput context, the chahār bāgh plan must perforce have had an entirely different symbolic resonance, because in Hindu philosophy and religion, the understanding of death and the afterlife, and the rituals by which those attitudes are expressed, are wholly different from those of Islam. An extraordinary photograph by Raghubir Rai shows the dry edges of the Yamuna River as it passes through Agra (fig. 22): the contrast between the human skull in the foreground and the monumental Taj on the far bank calls to mind the difference between Muslim observance of burial and entombment and the Hindu practice of cremation, particularly along the banks of the sacred Ganges, of which the Yamuna is a tributary. It hardly needs to be said that Rajput gardens, as well as Hindu gardens in general and Buddhist gardens, connoted something dif-
The Rajputs that most adhere to the Islamic garden canon are easiest to study because we can apply to them our knowledge of their Islamic counterparts and because that very process of translation into an Islamic idiom leaves the categories of Muslim/Mughal and Hindu/Rajput intact. Thus the courtyard and terrace gardens of the Amber Fort receive the most attention, while those in Orchha, the Nagaur Fort, and the City Palace of Udaipur—where the gardens are neither strict cross-axial chahār bāghs nor Kashmiri-style stepped terraces and indeed fit no recognized typology—are hardly known. These cases suggest that the widespread (but myopic) insistence on the chahār bāgh as the quintessential Islamic garden form may have distracted scholars from recognizing other kinds of formal planning, even in contexts such as Rajput forts, where the patrons and primary audience were not Muslim and did not look to the same tradition of landscape planning and meaning. Moreover, in pursuing a model defined by precise geometrical form (a practice learned from architectural history), scholars have too often overlooked the rich trove of references to sacred landscapes such as pools and groves in Sanskritic literature, which are characterized not by form but by function and meaning. In addition to references to the deities and the sacred spaces associated with them, the literature also sheds light on early Indian court gardens.
which Daud Ali shows to have been idealized spaces with formulaic components: spectacular waterworks, wooded bowers, and a hill (often an artificial mound). They were sumptuously appointed with textiles and wall paintings that invited recreation, romance, and festivity. Most importantly, he argues that in Buddhism, “celestial gardens developed in close dialogue with their earthly counterparts.” Early royal patrons sometimes tried to emulate the magnificent wonder of heavenly gardens, with pools of perfumed water, artificial trees with gold flowers, and embankments of sand made from pearls: these “formed an important space where the realm itself was projected and thought about.”

This is very close to the kind of arguments regarding the garden as political and environmental metaphor that I made in Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain (2000), and indicates a commonality among early gardens that may have been due to the garden’s expressive capacity as an aestheticized environmental response rather than the result of stylistic or technical evolution (as in architecture).

The blindness to autochthonous formal types and conceptual models has given rise to the assumption that all designed landscape forms in South Asia were an Islamic, and more specifically Persian, importation, with the result that Rajput gardens have either been regarded as derivative or ignored altogether. Ultimately, it may be useful to discard the category of “Islamic garden”—and with it the corollary “Rajput garden”—and instead acknowledge the complexity and interdependence of South Asian visual culture, as South Asianists have already done. This is particularly appropriate in the case of gardens because, responding to specific geoclimatic conditions such as the monsoon, intense heat, hilly or flat landscape morphology, and a regional pallette of trees and plants, the gardens of both Muslims and Hindus in South Asia drew upon the same repertoire of traditional cultivation practices. There were a great many pragmatic concerns that garden architects had in common, regardless of whether they served a Muslim patron, who perceived the garden as a foretaste of the paradise promised in the Koran, or a Rajput patron, who saw in pools and groves the presence of the gods. Historians have typically understood the Hindu approach to nature as responsive—seeing gods present in those places where nature has distinctive characteristics, such as springs, ponds, rivers, crossings, mountains, forests, and trees. But perhaps we should consider the other response, which is to seek to design and create places of worldly pleasure for mortals as well as places that might, in their shady arbors and deep waters, actually invite the gods to dwell there.

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NOTES

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1. Rajput is a Sanskrit word meaning “prince.” The Rajputs, who claim to be descended from deities, are not a dynasty but a large group of warriors who gained dominance in northern India sometime between the sixth and ninth century. In this essay, regnal dates are given for individual dynasties of Rajput rulers, but the dates are not those of the clan as a whole.

2. On the Amber Fort, see Oscar Reuther, Indische Paläste und Wohnhäuser (Berlin, 1925), and G. H. R. Tillotson, The Rajput Palaces: The Development of an Architectural Style, 1450–1750 (New Haven, 1987). Specifically on its gardens, see D. Fairchild Ruggles, “Gardens,” in Art of India: Prehistory to the Present, ed. Frederick Asher (Chicago, 2003), 258–70, and D. Fairchild Ruggles, “The Framed Landscape in Islamic Spain and Mughal India,” in Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain (2000), and indicates a commonality among early gardens that may have been due to the garden’s expressive capacity as an aestheticized environmental response rather than the result of stylistic or technical evolution (as in architecture).


4. A map of Amber, made of cloth, was drawn in 1711 for M. S. Jai Singh (collection of the National Museum, New Delhi). It was published by Susan Gole, Indian Maps and Plans: From Earliest Times to the Advent of European Surveys (New Delhi, 1989), 170–71, and is discussed in C. Asher, “Excavating Communalism,” 222–46, esp. 231–34.


6. B. L. Dharma, A Memoir on the Temple of Jagatshironmani at Amber (Jaipur, 1977). I was also fortunate to note that a garden workshop held in Nagaur (January 30–February 3, 2006).


11. Minakshi Jain, Architecture of a Royal Camp (Ahmedabad, 2009). Minakshi Jain and team, “Ahichatragarh, the Fort of Nagaur; Conservation Works Report to Facilitate Garden Workshop 30/01/06–3/02/06” (unpublished). My observations on Nagaur were made on the basis of fieldwork on site, but the following conclusions were made in discussion with Minakshi Jain, James Wescot, Giles Tillotson, Ratish Nanda, Milo Beach, Kathryn Gleason, Catherine Glynn, Amita Sinha, and others who attended the 2006 Nagaur Garden Workshop.

12. Because of the difficulty of supplying enough water, I was not convinced of the lotus hypothesis, imagining the garden as an orchard, like Orchha. But Rahul Mehrotra persuaded me by pointing out the visual logic of the kiosks’ placement: positioned on the edge of the large pool yet providing an overview of the garden that the presence of trees would have blocked.


16. For example, the inscriptions from Udaipur published by N. P. Chakravarti and B. C. Chhabra in multiple volumes of Epigraphia Indica (1951–53) and discussed in Jennifer Joffee, “Art, Architecture, and Politics in Mewar, 1628–1710” (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2005).

17. James Tod, Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India, 2 vols. (New Delhi, 1971; orig. pub. 1829–32).


of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, Compiled by His Royal Librarian; The Nineteenth-century Manuscript Translation of A.R. Fuller (British Library, addn. 30,777), ed. and comp. Wayne Begley and Z. A. Desai (Delhi and New York, 1990). Wayne Begley laments the lack of translated materials recording the reign of Shah Jahan. He notes the exception of 'Inayat Khan’s history of Shah Jahan, which was translated in the mid-nineteenth century by A. R. Fuller, but points to the fact that it remained an unpublished manuscript in the collection of the British Library. Nonetheless, there were even fewer available translations for the Rajputs and they mostly attracted only local interest.

20. Reuther, Indische Paläste und Wohnhäuser; Tillotson, Rajput Palaces; and George Michell and Antonio Martinelli, The Royal Palaces of India (New York and London, 1994). To these can be added less comprehensive works such as Sidney Toy, The Strongholds of India (Melbourne, 1957), as well as G. S. Ghurye, Rajput Architecture (Bombay, 1968), which, despite the book’s title, ignores all the Rajput palaces except Gwalior. Prominent among the older works is James Fergusson, History of Indian and Eastern Architecture (London, 1891), which included Rajput palaces in a short chapter called “Civil Architecture,” 470–88. The inclusion of Rajput architecture in such surveys, however, does not necessarily mean that the authors ever visited the more distant sites.

21. I am focusing on the Rajputs, but the same lament could be voiced for the Marathas, Jats, and other groups who patronized art and architecture in South Asia.


23. The interest in South Asia is relatively recent among historians of Islamic art from Europe and North America, stemming in part from the political events of 1979–80, when the Iranian Revolution effectively closed the doors of Iran to Western visitors. The taking of hostages in Lebanon and the Iranian Revolution effectively closed the doors of Iran to Western visitors. The Gulf War in Kuwait and Iraq made those areas less accessible and safe for Western scholars. With archaeological fieldwork rendered difficult or impossible in Iran and Iraq, the next two generations of art history curricula turned their attentions to South Asia.


25. Ernst Kühnel, Islamic Art and Architecture, trans. Katherine Watson (German first edition 1962; Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1966), 159 and 164. The sentiment is echoed in modern India, where for political reasons some prefer to see Muslim and Hindu as utterly distinct. Such a perspective obviously impedes the ability to study Rajput palace architecture, where the distinction argument does not hold.


27. Ruggles, "Islamic Art" (chap. 8), and Frederick Asher, “Art of South and Southeast Asia before 1200” (chap. 9) and “Art of South and Southeast Asia after 1200” (chap. 23), in Art History, ed. Michael Cothren and Marilyn Stokstad, 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J., 2010), 260–89, 290–323, 770–89. Unfortunately, the Cothren-Stokstad volume does not clearly acknowledge the specific authorship of individual chapters.


29. The term “Hindu” is used here with considerable unease. It is convenient as a term that broadly describes a set of religious practices and philosophies, and the architecture and artifacts that were produced by those religious and philosophical practices. But used to describe people and their cultural identity, it first conflates religion with culture and then condenses a variety of cultural identities into a single, simple, homogenous group. However, there is nothing homogenous about the group of South Asians typically defined as Hindu, other than that they are not Muslim. Nonetheless, I have used the word cautiously, simply for want of a better term and following the justification of S. Radhakrishnan, “Hinduism,” in A Cultural History of India, ed. A. L. Basham (New Delhi, 1975), 60.

30. A welcome exception to this is Catherine Asher and Cynthia Talbot, India before Europe (Cambridge, 2006). The myth of stable Muslim and Hindu cultural identities in an earlier period is the topic of Finbarr Flood’s Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval “Hindu-Muslim” Encounter (Princeton, N.J., 2009).


35. Personal communication, June 2006.


42. There is a burgeoning literature on “composite culture” and the idea of essential versus composite (or “hybrid”) categories of identity. Cynthia Talbot succinctly summarizes the debate in “Inscribing the Other, Inscribing the Self: Hindu-Muslim Identities in Pre-Colonial India,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, 4 (1995): 692–722.


45. This is a particularly vexing problem in South Asia, where the type of planting done in the Mughal era was almost entirely replaced by British-style planting. Few historians or archaeologists have explored this colonial layer. Recent exceptions are Eugenia Herbert, “The Taj and the Raj: Garden Imperialism in India,” *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes: An International Quarterly* 25, 4 (2005): 250–72; Eugenia Herbert, *Flora’s Empire: British Gardens in India* (Philadelphia, 2011); and A. Mukherji, *Red Fort of Shahjahanbad* (New Delhi, 2004).


47. Historians of South Asia have understood this more quickly than historians of Islamic art. For examples of discussions of Indian gardens as expressions of political power, environmental control, and pleasure, see Catherine Asher, “Gardens of the Nobility: Raja Man Singh and the Bagh-i Wah,” in Hussain, Rehman, and Wescoat, *Mughal Garden, 61–73, as well as the various contributions to Diamond and Glynn, *Garden and Cosmos*, and Ruggles, *Islamic Gardens*, 131–45. For the early centuries of the common era and Buddhist associations with the garden (which may have been absorbed into later Hindu belief), see Daud Ali, “Gardens in Early Indian Court Life,” *Studies in History*, n.s., 19, 2 (2003): 221–52.


The reign of the controversial Fatimid Egyptian caliph al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah (r. 996–1021) has been derided as a “psychotic” blip within the general context of the Fatimid period (909–1171), which usually is regarded as one of multi-confessional tolerance and artistic efflorescence. Within the context of interfaith collaboration, al-Hakim is often considered to be the single exception to this culture of tolerance and artistic production. While Fatimid courtly arts thrived under the reigns of his predecessors, al-Muʿizz (r. 953–75) and al-ʿAziz (r. 976–96), who founded the new capital city of Cairo, sponsored courtly luxury objects, and initiated major architectural projects, al-Hakim’s reign is most notorious for its destructive elements.

In the history of Christian-Muslim relations, al-Hakim is infamous for ordering the destruction of all the Christian churches in his realm, most notably that of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem—an act that would later mobilize Latin Crusaders to liberate the Holy Land from Muslim reign. Due to the capricious nature of al-Hakim’s reign, the precise context for these pivotal acts of destruction has been underexplored by scholars of architectural history, in spite of their key contribution to the history of church and mosque construction in the Middle East and their crucial role in the history of multi-confessional relations.

This essay takes a closer look at al-Hakim’s program of church demolition, bringing to light broader political, economic, and cultural forces that ultimately marked a change in Fatimid sectarian identity during his reign. An analysis of urban pressures at the time, together with a consideration of Islamic religious law (sharia), removes these acts of widespread church destruction, so iconic to his reign, from the context of psychotic whimsy, and places them within a larger socio-historical framework. This study suggests that al-Hakim’s destruction of churches was consistent with other extreme measures he took specifically tied to questions of faith—such as his persecutions of urban dhimmīs (non-Muslim subjects of a Muslim state), the public cursing of the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad and the first three caliphs, and his harsh, religiously-based restrictions against women. Rather than being reductively attributable to a personal psychological imbalance, al-Hakim’s dramatically negative treatment of churches signaled a general shift from an esoteric form of Ismaili Shiʿism to one more appealing to the broader Islamic umma. In considering this shift, this article draws not only on the frequently discussed Mamluk sources on the Fatimid period, but also on Christian and newly published Ismaili sources.

It is difficult to determine the chronology of al-Hakim’s destruction of churches with precision. As most sources focus on extant monuments, these acts have not always been recorded in detail. Many Muslim sources simply state that al-Hakim destroyed churches, without documenting any details of the particular structures. Christian sources, however, are more useful in recording the phases of church destruction under this caliph. Based on these accounts, al-Hakim’s treatment of churches may be divided into three distinct periods: 1) from his ascension to the throne as a young boy in 996 to circa 1009; 2) from 1009 to 1015; and 3) from 1015 to his mysterious death in 1021. The first two periods, which coincide with a marked shift in his reign and behavior, are the focus of this article.
THE STATUS OF EGYPTIAN DHIMMĪS BEFORE AL-HAKIM’S REIGN

After the Fatimid conquest of Egypt in 969, Christians and Jews in the Fatimid realm rose to prominent positions, and generally lived in favorable conditions. Continuing in the tradition of prior rulers of Egypt, the Fatimids took advantage of skilled dhimmīs in the administration of their empire. Notably, following the conquest of Cairo, al-Muʿizz appointed as his vizier the famous Jewish convert to Islam Yaʿqub ibn Killis, who continued to serve his son, al-ʿAziz. After Yaʿqub died, al-ʿAziz later relied on the services of an unconverted Christian, ʿIsa ibn Nasturus. Under these early Fatimid rulers, the Christian communities flourished, as did their churches.

The synergy between dhimmī and Islamic monuments is a subject that has gained increasing attention in art historical studies. Particularly in the arts of medieval Islam, the artistic traditions of Muslims, Christians, and Jews were often indistinguishable from one another. In the pre-Fatimid period, the mingling of shared forms between Islam and Christianity is elegantly demonstrated by the early tenth-century stucco decoration from the Church of al-ʿAdhraʾ at Dayr Suryani in the Wadi al-Natrun monastic complex. With its undulating arabesques, executed in characteristic stucco, these forms fit firmly within the tradition of the international Abbasid ornamental mode, based in Samarra but spread as widely as the ninth-century mosques of Ibn Tulun in Cairo and Samanid sites in Afghanistan and Nishapur. While the style was associated with the Abbasid caliphate, its incorporation into the Christian monument suggests that Abbasid imperial design transcended religious boundaries. The integration of crosses into the decorative program is the only indication that the stucco belongs within a Christian context.

This synergy continued and flourished in the Fatimid period, in which Christian and Muslim works of art shared similar motifs and styles. The restoration of the Church of Saint Mercurius (Dayr Abu Sayfayn), under the caliph al-ʿAziz, employed a technique in dome construction that paralleled those used at the Mosque of al-Hakim in the royal city of al-Qahira (990–1013), utilizing an octagonal transition from the square base to the dome, with niches in the corner. In woodwork, the church screen of Saint Barbara in Old Cairo recalls the wooden beams from the Fatimid palace, discovered in the Qalawun complex. In these examples, the delicate vegetal scrollwork occupies the background, while scenes of courtly life animate the foreground.

AL-HAKIM, “THE WILY AND FLAMBOYANT FATIMID”

In his poem “The Caliph,” which appeared in The New Yorker in 1996, Eric Ormsby colorfully characterized the dominant view of al-Hakim:
large-scale destruction of churches and synagogues are usually considered evidence of his mental defects and despotism. Many medieval chronicles document the reign of al-Hakim in great detail, attesting to its singularity. The contemporary Christian chronicler Yahya ibn Sa‘id al-Antaki even regarded al-Hakim’s unusual actions as possible evidence of mental illness. The wily and flamboyant Fatimid, the intricate Caligula of God, the neurasthenic delegate of prophets (may God pray for them!), forbade all women to wear shoes.Indeed, al-Hakim is a unique figure in the history of the medieval Mediterranean. His cruelty, bizarre edicts, and
the dogs in Cairo, and his forbidding both the consumption of mulukhiyya (a popular green vegetable) and the playing of chess. His behavior was rendered even more puzzling by the vacillation he showed in actually enacting the edicts he issued, many of which were first enforced, then retracted, and then reinstated, sometimes repeatedly.10

While many of his actions in his early life were enigmatic, his demise is perhaps still more mysterious. After becoming increasingly ascetic in his practices, reversing many of his prohibitions against dhimmīs, al-Hakim was declared divine by a group now known as the Druze, led by al-Darazi, whom the ruler eventually had put to death, in 1018.11 In 1021, al-Hakim disappeared on an evening walk in the Muqattam Hills of Cairo, though his clothes were later found, pierced with daggers. Many historians suspect that his sister, Sitt al-Mulk, ordered his execution, but the Druze believe in his divinity and proclaim that he will appear again at the end of days.12

During al-Hakim’s reign, the Fatimid Empire ruled over Ifriqiya, Egypt, the Hijaz, and Jerusalem, with intermittent control over lands in Syria. As Isma’ili Shi’is, the Fatimids declared themselves caliphs in opposition to their Sunni rivals, the Abbasids in Iraq (750–1258) and the Spanish Umayyads (711–1031). The unified nature of the Islamic caliphate was thus splintered into three competing dynasties. However, during the time of al-Hakim, the Iraqi Abbasid caliphs were under the control of Shi’i Buyids (945–1055). Thus, sectarian divisions and identity were of paramount importance in the caliphal rivalry of the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Although this essay focuses on the destruction of churches under al-Hakim, his reign was not predominantly defined by architectural demolition. On the contrary, it was a productive period of architectural patronage, with the completion of the Mosque of al-Anwar (now known as the Mosque of al-Hakim), the Mosque of al-Maqs, the Rashida Mosque and the Mosque of al-Lu’lu’a, as well as the establishment of the Dār al-hikma (or Dār al-ʿilm, house of knowledge), and the patronage of a major observatory in the Muqattam Hills. These projects, in fact, often coincided with the destruction of churches.13

While his predecessors and successors are noted for their openness to the dhimmī populations in their realm, al-Hakim is considered a singular exception in an era of interfaith cooperation. As in all medieval Muslim societies, Christians and Jews were considered “people of the book” (ahl al-kitāb) and as such were treated as a protected population. The dhimmīs were allowed to practice their religion in return for their loyalty to the state and the payment of an extra head tax known as the jizya. However, as mentioned earlier, under the Fatimids, these communities rose to particular prominence and were generally granted the freedom to practice their faith openly.

In his seminal work on inter-confessional relations in the medieval Mediterranean, S. D. Goitein suggests that the Fatimid Empire was characterized by “a spirit of tolerance and liberalism.”14 In contrast, he characterizes al-Hakim’s large-scale destruction of Christian and Jewish monuments as a “fit of religious insanity” and vividly describes the ruler as “the interesting psychopathic caliph, who ordered the destruction of churches and synagogues.”15 Goitein’s diagnosis of insanity as the reason behind al-Hakim’s decision to raze churches and synagogues dominates the modern scholarly assessment of this destructive aspect of al-Hakim’s architectural program.

Although the dominant narrative in modern scholarship links al-Hakim’s bizarre behavior with his demolition of church buildings, medieval accounts suggest a more complex dynamic. Rather than viewing the destruction of churches and synagogues as a symptom of his madness, medieval Muslim sources often praise al-Hakim on this account, while criticizing the decision to rebuild these monuments at the end of his life.16

AL-HAKIM’S EARLY REIGN, A “TIME OF PEACE” FOR THE CHURCHES

In the first years of al-Hakim’s reign, from 996 until circa 1010, the young caliph continued the general pattern of church tolerance established by the early Fatimid caliphs. The History of the Patriarchs refers to these early years as a “time of peace” for the churches, even though harsh sumptuary laws against Christians were instituted at this time. Several accounts offer examples of al-Hakim visiting monasteries early in his reign, and there are some Christian and Jewish sources that mention him positively.18 An account in the History of the Pa-
had caused offense. Yahya al-Antaki recounts that it was, in fact, a group of Muslims who attacked the Christians and destroyed the building and other nearby churches. This highlights the fact that the Muslim segment of the urban populace was often in conflict with the Christians regarding the issue of church restoration. Interestingly, however, in these early cases of church demolition, the sources suggest that the Christians were allowed to reconstruct their houses of worship elsewhere; this may indicate that the religious structures were not destroyed merely out of intolerance, but as a part of a constructive plan to build new Muslim structures, and as an attempt to Islamicize the Fatimid city.

While al-Hakim’s early reign did not result in the destruction of many churches, it did introduce a series of harsh sumptuary laws against the Christians and Jews in his realms. These include the prohibition of wine in 1003 (393) and again in 1005 (396), and the order to wear the zunnār (a black belt designated for dhimmīs) in 1004 (395). Additionally, in 1003, he had the Christian administrator, Fahd ibn Ibrahim, executed, and arrested several Jewish and Christian secretary-scribes (kuttāb).

CURSING THE COMPANIONS AND THE FIRST THREE CALIPHS: AN ANTI-SUNNI PUBLIC TEXT

However, in these years al-Hakim’s harsh persecutions extended beyond the dhimmī context to include the Sunnis in his realm, indicating a desire to orient his rulership toward a specifically Ismaili faith. In 1005, al-Maqrizi recorded that al-Hakim changed the face of the architectural structures of Cairo and Fustat by ordering that curses on the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad and the first three caliphs be inscribed throughout the city. These imprecations were placed on the mosques of the city, including the central mosque of Fustat, and the oldest in Cairo, the Mosque of ʿAmr (jāmiʿ ʿatīq). According to al-Maqrizi, the curses were recorded on the inside (bāṭin) and the outside (ẓāhir) of all the mosques, on the doors and walls of shops, and on graves. He adds that these curses were painted in various colors and in gold, and that residents of the city were forced to place them on the doorways of the markets and houses. The act seems to have been correlated...
with increasing Ismaili activity, as more people from Cairo-Fustat came to join the da’wa (Ismaili mission) shortly thereafter. Al-Maqrizi records that the Ismaili crowds were so large that people were crushed in the confusion.25

Although the text does not record the epigraphic style of the curses, al-Maqrizi’s reference to the variety of colors and gold used to inscribe them confirms the attention given to their aesthetic dimension, while the sheer scale of this project—on the mosques, shops, tombstones, and houses of Cairo-Fustat—points to a well-organized caliphal initiative, manifest in a particularly Shi‘i tradition. In this way, these early actions of al-Hakim, as expressed in the built environment, not only were intended to persecute dhimmīs, but also represented an effort to “Ismailize” the urban space and its inhabitants. The tradition of cursing the first three caliphs and the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad was not limited to the Fatimid context, but also occurred in the Shi‘i-Sunni conflicts of Abbasid Baghdad, highlighting the centrality of sectarian identity in the contestation of power in the Islamic world in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The episode also points to the increasing importance of the public display of prominent texts in the Fatimid realm, a development seen in the inscriptions of the minarets of the Mosque of al-Anwar (now known as the Mosque of al-Hakim), constructed at roughly the same time (fig. 6).26

Indeed, in these early years many of al-Hakim’s persecutions and prohibitions are described in a particularly anti-Sunni context. Even the sumptuary laws against Christians and Jews were characterized in such a way. Al-Maqrizi notes that the special waistband (zunnār) and badges (ghiyār) worn by Christians and Jews should be black, since this was the color of the Sunni Abbasids. Even seemingly bizarre edicts, such as the banning of mulukhiyya and jirjir (two popular Egyptian vegetables) were associated with anti-Sunni sentiments, as mulukhiyya had been favored by the Umayyad caliph Mu‘awiya b. Abi Sufyan and jirjir was associated with the Prophet’s wife, ‘Aisha, the daughter of Abu Bakr, who opposed the succession of ‘Ali as caliph.27

Al-Hakim’s treatment of the Sunnis and dhimmīs in his realm shifted markedly following the revolt of the North African rebel known as Abu Rakwa. Born Walid b. Hisham b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Abd al-Rahman, Abu Rakwa claimed to be a descendant of the Spanish Umayyad dynasty. Once rivals to the Abbasid and Fatimid empires, the power of the Spanish Umayyads had waned in the previous years, resulting in the persecution of the Umayyad family in al-Andalus. Apparently, this persecution partially motivated Abu Rakwa’s flight from Spain to North Africa, where he sought to establish his own power, in contestation with the Fatimid dynasty.28 Abu Rakwa used his Umayyad heritage as a source of legitimacy, traveling throughout North Africa, where he taught the Koran and hadith, and promoted Sunni doctrine. Eventually, Abu Rakwa gained the support of the Banu Qurra, a vehemently anti-Fatimid Bedouin tribe in Libya; he also brought the Berber Zanata to his anti-Fatimid, Sunni cause.29 The mission of Abu Rakwa was couched largely in sectarian terms, aimed at wresting power from the heretical Shi‘i Fatimids and reclaiming it for the rightful Sunni heirs to the caliphate. The sectarian message of Abu Rakwa’s revolt was demonstrated in his use of al-Hakim’s cursing of the Prophet’s Companions and the first three caliphs in Cairo as a rallying point against the Fatimid rulers.30
Abu Rakwa had begun his anti-Fatimid mission as early as 1004, although it would take a few years for him to become a discernible threat to the authorities in Cairo. His movement first caught the attention of the Fatimid caliph when he marched into Barqa, in Palestine. Al-Hakim sent troops to quash the rebellion, after initial diplomatic efforts proved unsuccessful. When the troops failed to contain the rebels, al-Hakim sent five thousand more men under the command of the Turkic general Yanal. In an upsetting shift in power, the Fatimid armies were defeated by Abu Rakwa’s troops. In October 1005 (Dhu ‘l-Hijja 395), the rebel claimed victory in Barqa and declared himself al-Walid b. Hisham, the Umayyad Qa’il (a messiah-like figure), and Amir al-Mu’minin (a caliphal title, meaning “commander of the faithful”). He assumed the title al-Nasir li-Dīn Allāh (the Victor of God’s Religion), which was struck on coins in the realm, and had the khutba read in his name. According to sources, upon Abu Rakwa’s victory in Barqa “Sunni law [was] declared supreme throughout the land of his conquest.”

The true urgency of the Abu Rakwa revolt became clear to al-Hakim when the Umayyad pretender advanced toward Cairo, besieging Alexandria and progressing as far as Giza. Abu Rakwa’s swift conquest sent waves of panic throughout the Fatimid administration and, it would seem, the general population. Under the leadership of the general Fadl b. Salih, Abu Rakwa was finally defeated. After fleeing to Nubia, where the Nubian king was paid to give him up, he was finally captured, brought to Cairo, and executed in 1006–7. Abu Rakwa’s revolt not only brought territorial losses, but also precipitated an economic crisis in Egypt. Al-Musabbih noted that prices rose significantly and bread became scarce. Al-Hakim reacted by executing anyone found guilty of inflating prices or hoarding coins.

Abu Rakwa did not look to the Sunni rulers of the Spanish Umayyads or Abbasids for assistance in his quest for power but instead operated on a grassroots level in North Africa, appealing to the popular masses, who would support his own private, Sunni caliphate as an antidote to the heretical Shi‘i Fatimids. The complexity of this relationship is illustrated by the fact that although Abu Rakwa preached a Sunni doctrine, he was resisted fiercely and feared by the populations of Alexandria and Cairo-Fustat. Although there is no evidence that Abu Rakwa garnered the general support of local Egyptian Sunnis, his reliance on tales of al-Hakim’s anti-Sunni measures as a catalyst for revolt marked a turning point in al-Hakim’s treatment of the Sunni populations in Egypt and the empire’s strategy in gaining support throughout eastern Islamic lands. While much of the rebellion could be said to have been politically opportunistic, taking advantage of the region’s economic hardship and al-Hakim’s ill treatment of the North African tribes, the rhetoric of the revolt was based in sectarian divisions. Using al-Hakim’s cursing of the Companions as an illustration of Shi‘i heresy, Abu Rakwa gathered enough Sunni sympathizers to pose a threat to the powerful Fatimids. While there was probably never a real danger of Abu Rakwa overthrowing the Fatimid caliphate, his surprising victories served as a wakeup call to the Fatimid ruler that would alter the tenor of Sunni-Shi‘i relations in the years to come. Thus, Abu Rakwa’s revolt marks a turning point in sectarian relations during the reign of al-Hakim.

SUNNI RAPPROCHEMEN AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER (CA. 1010)

It seems that after the threat posed by Abu Rakwa subsided, al-Hakim instituted a policy of rapprochement with the Sunni majority of his realm. In 1007, he pardoned the Arab Berber Banu Qurra tribe, which had been an instrumental supporter of Abu Rakwa, and he also began to mitigate his own persecutions of his Sunni subjects. The new, favorable, Sunni-oriented policy literally altered the face of Cairo and Fustat’s buildings as al-Hakim ordered that the curses inscribed in gold denouncing the Rashidun be removed from all the mosques. In an apparent concession, al-Hakim ordered that the Companions be mentioned only in connection with the good deeds they had done, especially Abu Bakr. In addition, the caliph allowed for a practice that resulted in a decrease in explicitly Shi‘i expressions in the city fabric: in 1009 (399), he decreed that his subjects could begin and end their fasting by sighting the moon, according to Sunni practices, rather than by Shi‘i
calculations. He reinstated the qunūt and ḍuḥā (forms of prayer), which had been forbidden by the Fatimids since 980–81,33 and also declared that muezzins would not be punished if they omitted from the call to prayer the Shi‘i formula ḥayya ʿalā khayr al-ʿamal (come to good works), which had been in use since Jawhar established it at the time of the conquest. In this way, al-Hakim began to shift the focus of his reign away from expressly Shi‘i concerns to address the Sunni majority.34

Concurrent with this Sunni rapprochement was the large-scale destruction of churches. It is important to note that popular fervor for such demolitions had already been rising during the reigns of al-Mu‘izz and al-ʿAziz.35 Yet it reached another level in the second phase of al-Hakim’s reign, most notably with the destruction of one of the most sacred buildings for Christians, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. Sources disagree on the precise date of this watershed moment, with Muslim sources generally stating that the destruction happened in 1007 and Christian sources suggesting a slightly later date of 1009 or 1010.36 At the time of the monument’s destruction, Jerusalem was under the control of the Fatimid caliphs, yet the church remained an important Christian pilgrimage site and was protected by a Fatimid treaty with Byzantium. Jerusalem had stood at the center of disputes between the Islamic caliphates and Christian Byzantium since the Arab conquest of the city in 638. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher symbolized the Christian presence in the Holy Land, standing as a testament to the most central mystery in the Christian faith, marking the site of Christ’s Crucifixion, Entombment, and Resurrection.

The Byzantine empress Helena (d. ca. 330) famously discovered the rock-hewn tomb of Christ in 326, and a martyrium was constructed around it between 325–26 and 336. While the monument was destroyed under al-Hakim and its exact form prior to destruction is unknown, a series of tenth-century ivories represent it as a cylindrical structure, typical of Byzantine-era martyria. In one surviving ivory, dated to the early tenth century, and now at the Cloisters museum in New York, the three Marys are depicted at the Tomb of Christ. The cylindrical structure is similar to the reconstructed edicule, which continues to mark the site of the tomb today (fig. 7).37 Connected to the rotunda of the sepulcher was a basilica, linking the tomb to Golgotha, the site of Christ’s Crucifixion. In this way, the church housed the central aspects of the Christian miracles, enclosing the site of Christ’s Crucifixion and Resurrection in a single monument.38 While the architectural details of the pre-Fatimid church are known primarily through textual and archaeological projects, we do have a few remaining images of the early structure. The Holy Sepulcher is

were also a concern for contemporary chroniclers. Muslim authors of the period lament the fact that although Jerusalem was controlled by Muslim dynasties, Christians and Jews were the primary inhabitants. Not surprisingly then, many of the same religious-based power struggles appear in the Jerusalem literature as in the local Egyptian literature. In 985, al-Muqaddasi, the most famous Muslim chronicler of Jerusalem, wrote: "Her streets are never empty of strangers...Everywhere the Christians and Jews have the upper hand." Before the Fatimids took control, Abbasid Jerusalem was attacked frequently and Christian monuments plundered, a sign of the multi-confessional tensions in the city. Ultimately, al-Hakim’s destruction of the Holy Sepulcher symbolically asserted Muslim domination over the contested city.

Although this act invalidated the Fatimid treaty with Byzantium, Byzantine reports did not take much notice of the razing of the church. Moreover, at that time, Fatimid-Byzantine relations were relatively secure, unlike in the earlier reign of al-ʿAziz, which was defined by wars over Syrian territory. Although the destruction of the church would later be taken up as a theme in restoring Byzantine relations under the reign of al-Zahir (r. 1021–36) and subsequent rulers, there was not a loud outcry among the Eastern Christian population at the time of its destruction. However, the later Christian Crusaders used this episode as a rallying cry to defend the Holy Land from the Muslim empires.

Ultimately, the precise reason for the destruction of the church remains unknown. According to the Buyid chronicler Hilal al-Sabi (d. 447 [1056]) as well as al-Maqrizi, al-Hakim was curious about the Christians who made a pilgrimage to the church every Easter. When the caliph inquired about this practice, one of his dāʿīs (Ismaili missionaries) informed him that the church was so significant to the Christians that the Byzantine emperor sometimes attended Easter celebrations in disguise and gave the church expensive gifts. The sources also lament that the Christians visited the church much as Muslims visited Mecca, and that there was too much pomp surrounding this act. They also suggest that al-Hakim was especially angered that Christian pilgrims regarded it as the locus of miracles, particularly the miracle of the Holy Fire.
Although the precise reasons as to why al-Hakim destroyed the church remain a mystery, the multivalent results of its demolition were praised by many writers in the medieval Muslim world, and the apparently strong support for the act became leverage for al-Hakim's ambitions. By destroying a formerly protected monument that had resided at the heart of Muslim-Christian struggles for centuries, al-Hakim had accomplished something that previous Muslim rulers were reluctant or unable to do. Ibn al-Qalanisi (d. 1160) noted that when the church was destroyed, Muslims rejoiced and that when word of this reaction reached the caliph, he was overjoyed and encouraged to demolish more churches in his realm. To enlist popular support for this act, al-Hakim did not collect its precious objects for his own treasury upon its razing, but instead allowed the local populations to rob and plunder it, making them complicit in the deed. The fervor of the destruction is attested in Yahya al-Antaki's report that it was "plucked up stone by stone," and was accompanied by the razing of other churches in Jerusalem, in addition to the desecration of a graveyard and a convent. The demolition of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, together with the acclaim it brought al-Hakim throughout the Muslim world, seems to have emboldened the caliph to embark on an intensified program of church destruction and persecution of Christians and Jews in the following years.

RAZING EGYPT'S CHURCHES: THE ISLAMICIZATION OF THE FATIMID EMPIRE

It is particularly difficult to piece together the precise policy for church demolition instituted by the Fatimids following the destruction of the Holy Sepulcher. Many Muslim sources state simply that all the churches were destroyed. In analyzing this phenomenon, we are faced with the difficult task of assessing structures that are no longer extant and, therefore, were not always recorded in medieval accounts. In examining some of the specific instances of destruction, I have relied particularly on the analysis of Abu Salih, an Armenian Christian who recorded the history of Egyptian churches in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. As several of the churches and monasteries he documented were initially destroyed under al-Hakim and then rebuilt, his account allows for a consideration of key demolitions.

The Monastery of Qusayr offers a rare example of a dated Egyptian church destruction and, by all accounts, this event occurred after the obliteration of the Holy Sepulcher. The description of its demolition suggests a tide of public support for such acts. The monastery, a favorite location for the early rulers of Egypt, was particularly famous for its mosaic depictions of the Virgin Mary. However, according to al-Maqrizi, in 1010 al-Hakim ordered it razed, and the subsequent plundering lasted several days. Abu Salih also recorded this event, corroborating the theme of plunder. According to his account, "a band of the common people came here, and seized the coffins of the dead, the timbers from the ruins." In this manner, a fervor for destruction was given a caliphal endorsement in the middle period of al-Hakim's reign. However, accounts suggest that grave robbers raided this church so extensively that al-Hakim finally had to put a stop to it, providing further evidence that church destruction was encouraged by populist urban pressures. While unique in their impact, the destructions attest more to political ambition buttressed by popular support than to the maniacal whims of a mentally unhinged ruler.

Church destructions may have functioned as something more than an indicator of al-Hakim's personal anti-Christian zealotry. Instead, they appear as part of his political program of shoring up support for his rule and for the Fatimid caliphate through an urban renewal project aimed at further Islamicization of the empire, oriented toward the Sunni majority. The case of the Church of Saint Mennas, located in al-Hamra, between Cairo and Fustat, provides the first of several examples (fig. 9). Much information about the Monastery and Church of Saint Mennas comes to us through Abu Salih, who described it as having experienced various periods of decay and restoration prior to the Fatimid period. It also contained the bodies of many saints. He further writes, "this church was wrecked, and its columns were carried away and it was turned into a mosque, in the caliphate of al-Hakim; and a minaret was built for it." According to Abu Salih, al-Hakim did not simply destroy the church; he changed certain confessional signifiers,
for example, through the addition of a minaret. Likewise, in the case of the Monastery of St. John the Baptist, near the lake of al-Habash, Abu Salih recounts that “al-Hakim seized upon part of this monastery and church, and rebuilt it as a mosque, with a minaret, and his name was inscribed on it.” By such means al-Hakim in effect transformed Christian monuments into mosques. It is particularly interesting to note the inscription of the caliph’s name on the newly Islamicized structures, as his name also appeared on the original minarets of the Mosque of al-Anwar. Indeed, in most of the accounts given by Abu Salih, the churches destroyed by al-Hakim were turned into mosques, suggesting a larger movement to Islamize the city and country. A church in al-Ashmunayn was also turned into a mosque. Likewise, Abu Salih mentions a large monastery and church “composed of tessarae of glass gilded and colored; and its pillars were of marble; but it was wrecked by al-Hakim.”

The specific trajectory of reconstruction after demolition can perhaps best be thought of as part of a larger urban renewal project designed to win political favor. The obliteration or conversion of non-Islamic monuments signaled a shift in architectural priorities toward Islamic structures that was further supported by a program of endowment. In 1010, the year of the most intensive demolitions, al-Hakim endowed the Dār al-ʿilm/Dār al-hikma in Cairo, along with the mosques of Al-Azhar, Rashida, and Maqs. These would be guaranteed financing, thereby ensuring their continuation and solidifying the significance of the caliph’s Islamic architectural projects. The endowment of these structures indicates the extent of al-Hakim’s architectural and urban concerns, and suggests that al-Hakim’s treatment of Christian monuments was not merely destructive, but part of a larger pattern of urban Islamicization and renewal.

CHURCH DESTRUCTION AND CALIPHAL LEGITIMACY

News of al-Hakim’s rapprochement with his Sunni subjects and his policy of razing churches spread beyond the Egyptian context and was embraced by Muslims in Abbasid territory. Evidence exists that this broader program did bear fruit in terms of the caliph’s influence and popularity. In 1010, shortly after al-Hakim had had several churches destroyed, Qirwash b. Muqallayd, the Iraqi governor, pledged his allegiance to the Fatimid rather than to the Abbasid caliph, reading the khutba in the name of al-Hakim and striking the Fatimid ruler’s name on coins, both of which were purely caliphal prerogatives. The centrality of al-Hakim’s role in destroying churches is noted in the text of this khutba:

Thanks to God Who by His light dispels the flood of anger and by His majesty demolishes the pillars of graven images and by His power causes the sun of righteousness to rise in the west.

By evoking the “pillars of graven images” that al-Hakim destroyed, Qirwash uses the ruler’s program of church
destruction as a rallying cry to the Muslim faithful. Although this pronouncement lasted only one month, it demonstrated both the success of the Ismaili daʿwa and the increasing popularity of the Fatimid caliph beyond Egyptian lands as a result of his demolition of Christian monuments and increasing sympathy to the Sunni and Shiʿi populations beyond his empire.60

While al-Muʿizz and al-ʿAziz explicitly sought control of the Eastern lands of Islam through military incursions, al-Hakim focused on gaining ideological inroads into Abbasid territories through increasing daʿwa activities and other propagandistic efforts. Yahya al-Antaki noted his non-military propaganda in the Abbasid realm, writing:

[al-Hakim] drew most of the people of distant places to support him and follow him. He was recognized in the prayer in al-Kufa and his propaganda reached the gate of Baghdad and into the city of al-Rayy. He sent many splendid articles to the governors and rebels in the districts of Iraq to win them to his side.61

Yahya also mentions al-Hakim’s eastern ambitions, noting that when a visiting merchant had his goods confiscated, he praised the caliph by claiming that the ruler would soon hold Baghdad “and the territory which he did not as yet control”; this pleased al-Hakim so much that he gave the merchant thousands of dinars.62

The impact of al-Hakim’s ideological program outside Egypt is reflected in the chants that Shiʿi protesters shouted in Baghdad in 1008, “Yā Ḥākim! Yā Mansūr!” referring to the Ismaili caliph as the preferred ruler.63 Two years later, around the same time that Qirwash b. Muqallayd pledged his loyalty to al-Hakim, ‘Ali al-Asadi, the chief of the Banu Asad, also proclaimed his allegiance to the Fatimid caliph in Hilla.

The increasing popularity of al-Hakim in the Abbasid realm was a critical threat to the Abbasids and the Shiʿi Buyids, who controlled them. As such, Qirwash was forced to retract his earlier message of support just one month after offering it. Indeed, al-Hakim’s influence had spread through Abbasid territory to the point that, in the following year, under the Buyid vizierate of Fakhr al-Mulk, the Abbasid caliph al-Qadir (r. 991–1031) gathered important members of his empire, including various Twelver Shiʿi leaders and the ashraf (sing. shārif, one claiming descent from Muhammad) nobility, and compiled a manifesto denouncing the Fatimid lineage, accusing the dynasty of destroying Islam.64 In 1011, this decree was read at all of the mosques in Abbasid territory, testifying to their role as sites for religio-political propaganda in the tenth and early eleventh centuries. The so-called “Baghdad Manifesto” marked a turning point in Fatimid history, confirming that the dynasty posed a substantial threat to the Iraqi-based leadership. It underscored the importance of the claim to ʿAlid descent for their power, and the importance of uniting Sunnis and Shiʿa against them.65 At the same time the manifesto was drafted, a treatise was composed against Ismaili doctrine, once again demonstrating the perceived threat of the Fatimid worldview in this crucial period of al-Hakim’s reign, coinciding with massive church destructions.66

The writings of al-Kirmani (d. 1021), the most important dāʿī of al-Hakim’s age and his chief apologist, provide further support for the idea that al-Hakim’s destruction of churches was integral to a wider program of political propaganda and shifting sectarian relations. Al-Kirmani’s treatises, recently translated by Paul Walker, offer tremendous insight into the Fatimid zeitgeist during al-Hakim’s reign.

Originally from Iran, al-Kirmani was active in the eastern Islamic lands until he came to Cairo to serve at al-Hakim’s court. He can be credited with altering the philosophical discourse of medieval Ismaili thought. Perhaps the most revealing window into al-Hakim’s approach to sectarian relations can be found in al-Kirmani’s treatise al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma (Lights to Illuminate the Proof of the Imamate).67 Unlike many Ismaili treatises, this work was not intended for the daʿwa, but was instead addressed to the Buyid vizier in Baghdad, Fakhr al-Mulk. Rather than explicate the philosophical details of the Ismaili faith, the work acted as an overt piece of political propaganda, aimed at shifting the vizier’s alliances to the Fatimid cause.68 Al-Kirmani’s treatise was written as a series of proofs, aimed at demonstrating to the eastern Shiʿa the necessity of the imamate and al-Hakim’s legitimacy as the living imam. In his proofs, al-Kirmani does not emphasize al-Hakim as the source of esoteric (bāṭin) knowledge but as a lawgiver and figure who commands his subjects in
Islamic law. In the second half of the treatise, al-Kirmani considers al-Hakim in an international context, noting that he was preceded by a series of “false imams.” In this proof al-Kirmani emphasizes al-Hakim’s fulfillment of the requirements to “command the good and forbid the bad,” as well as his success safeguarding property and sexual relationships. These acts are consistent with the exoteric (zāhir), non-Ismaili laws, which are accepted universally by all Islamic sects. The emphasis on al-Hakim as a commander of morality appears repeatedly throughout the text. In particular, al-Kirmani argues that al-Hakim was far more dedicated in his commitment to this injunction than were his Spanish Umayyad and Abbasid rivals. Central to this effort is his swift, harsh justice of tearing down churches. Al-Kirmani notes:

There is ample evidence of his commanding the good and prohibiting the bad, which none can deny, in the way he lives, devoting his nights and days to strengthening the word of truth, aiding the oppressed, building mosques, tearing down churches, preserving the communal prayer, applying the regulations of the law and confirming them and the corporal punishment [emphasis mine].

Al-Kirmani specifically suggests that tearing down churches was a central aspect of al-Hakim’s Islamic legitimacy, considered in the vein of “commanding the good, prohibiting the bad,” and regarded alongside mosque construction as a core caliphal prerogative. He notes that this is in direct contrast to the permissive nature of the families of the Umayyads and Abbasids. Al-Kirmani’s text suggests that al-Hakim, by addressing the Buyid ruler, was striving for wider Islamic support.

“COMMANDING THE GOOD AND FORBIDDING THE BAD”: AL-HAKIM AND ISLAMIC SHARIA

The relation of al-Hakim’s acts to a strict interpretation of the sharia is demonstrated by comparing his deeds to the tenets set forth in the so-called Covenant of ‘Umar, a treaty between Sophronius (d. 638), the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the second caliph, ‘Umar b. Khattab (r. 634–44), outlining the rights and responsibilities of Christians under Muslim rule. Although modern scholars have debated the precise dating of this pact, it is based on the treaties made by ‘Umar b. Khattab as he conquered lands dominated by Christians and Jews. In all the versions of this covenant, the treatment of churches is of central importance, as can be seen in the decree that Christians may not repair dilapidated houses of worship or build new ones.

In his study, Tritton translates one version of the pact, which is in the form of a letter from the Christians:

When you came to us we asked of you safety for our lives, our families, our property, and the people of our religion on these conditions; to pay tribute out of hand and be humiliated; not to hinder any Muslim from stopping in our churches by night or day, to entertain him there three days and give him food there and open to him their doors; to beat the nāqūs (a board beaten to announce the prayer) only gently in them and not to raise our voices in them in chanting; not to shelter there, nor in any of our houses, a spy of your enemies; not to build a church, convent, hermitage or cell, nor repair those that are dilapidated, nor assemble in any that is in a Muslim quarter, nor in their presence; not to display idolatry nor to invite it, nor show a cross on our churches, nor in any of the roads or markets of the Muslims…to tie the zunnār round our waists; to keep to our religion; not to resemble Muslims in dress, appearance... [emphasis mine].

Other aspects of the Covenant of ‘Umar directly correspond to al-Hakim’s persecutions of the Christians and Jews in his lands, including the prescription to wear distinctive clothing and the banning of the ringing of the nāqūs and general public displays of Christianity, provisions that al-Hakim seems to have been addressing in many of his anti-dhimmī edicts. Another version of the covenant restates these prohibitions regarding overt displays of religion and further declares that Christians are not to engage in Easter or Palm Sunday processions. These restrictions relate directly to the pomp and unseemly ceremony that al-Hakim learned had been taking place at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, engendering his wrath. Whether or not the final form of the Covenant of ‘Umar was codified at the time of Fatimid rule, it is significant that many of the most condemned acts of the caliph were promoted in this Sunni text, and that the relative tolerance of al-Hakim’s ancestors in the treatment of dhimmī monuments was, in fact, against ‘Umar’s precedent.
Although the pact does not call for the destruction of any of the churches, as carried out by al-Hakim, it does challenge the precedent of tolerance of church repair established by al-Hakim’s Fatimid predecessors, under whom many churches were restored and new structures built. While the precise form of the Covenant of ‘Umar may or may not have been recorded by the time of the Fatimid caliphate, it is clear from the accounts of church destructions that many of them resulted from violations of the basic tenets of the covenant.

Another example of the codification of behavior toward dhimmis, as well as the governing of the urban masses, can be seen in hisba manuals of the medieval Islamic world. Indeed, Caliph ‘Umar was also to be the first to perform the role of Islamic market inspector (muhtasib), whose duties were consistent with the Covenant of ‘Umar in its treatment of the dhimmis and its obligation to “order good and forbid evil.” The muhtasib had two primary functions: first, to ensure the “orderly and equitable running of the market,” and second, to guarantee “public morals and the correct execution of Islamic ritual and law.”74 Once again, the earliest preserved examples of hisba manuals slightly postdate the Fatimid period. However, Fatimid sources demonstrate the increasing prominence of the muhtasib in their administrative system. Al-Maqrizi describes robes of honor and a turban being given to a muhtasib, whose name was read out in the Mosque of Ibn Tulun and the Mosque of ‘Amr.75 Al-Hakim himself is said to have taken on the position of the muhtasib during his reign, a claim that is not entirely surprising given his demonstrated interest in morality and the urban environment. Although the earliest preserved hisba manual from the eastern Islamic realm postdates al-Hakim’s reign, written by al-Shayzari (d. 1193) in the twelfth century, the treatment of the dhimmis outlined by this author is consistent with the unusual caliph’s acts.76

The role of the muhtasib is at times specifically conceptualized as embracing the outward laws of Islam, as opposed to the esoteric dimensions of the Ismaili faith. For example, in discussing the muhtasib’s duty to oversee mosques and ensure that people pray diligently, al-Shayzari argues that this is:

...in order to show the characteristic outward forms of the religion and the sign of Islam. This is especially important in this time of many innovations, differing sects, various forms of the bāṭiniyya and those who have declared the destruction of Islamic law and the abolition of the norms of Islam.77

Another treatise on the hisba, by the Sunni scholar al-Ghazali (d. 1111), written in the Seljuq context, echoes these sentiments, noting:

The strange thing is that the Shi‘ites have gone to extremes in this, and have stated that it is not permitted to order good until the infallible appears, their Imam of Truth.78

While these texts postdate al-Hakim’s reign, their place in Sunni religious practice sheds new light on his treatment of churches and the tension between Shi‘i esoteric faith and the Sunni sharia. Many of the harsh prescriptions and destructions of this caliph are, in fact, consistent with a puritanical strain of medieval Sunni thought. In his study of ‘amr bi’l-ma’ruf (commanding the good), Michael Cook identifies al-Hakim as the one Fatimid caliph to concern himself with this injunction, while other rulers who embraced esoteric dimensions of Ismailism did not.79

DHIMMI MONUMENTS AT THE END OF AL-HAKIM’S REIGN

The intense persecutions of dhimmis, as large-scale destruction of dhimmis, resulted in mass conversions to Islam and dhimmis emigration to Byzantine territory. Among those who emigrated at this time was the Fatimid chronicler Yahya al-Antaki. While the conversions and razing of churches that took place within his realm may have been supported by many members of the community, al-Hakim enigmatically reversed these decisions in 1021. The History of the Patriarchs noted that for three years, “no one was able to make the oblation in the lands of Misr, except in the monasteries alone,” and people who “could not endure to be away from Holy Mysteries” would offer bribes to go at night to “remote and ruined churches” and hide church vestments. It continued:

After this, after another three years, they began to restore the churches in the houses and to consecrate them secretly and to pray in them and to communicate (in them). The Possessor of the Order used to write to the Sultan who was
METHOD IN MADNESS: RECONTEXTUALIZING THE DESTRUCTION OF CHURCHES IN THE FATIMID ERA

In Jumada II 411 (September–October 1020), al-Hakim allowed the reconstruction and reestablishment of the waqfs of churches in and around Jerusalem and the Church of Lydda. In Shaʿban 411 (November–December 1020), he allowed all converted Christians to return to their faith. Significantly, while modern scholars deride the intolerance of al-Hakim’s destruction of Christian monuments, medieval Muslim sources often praise him for the obliteration of dhimmī structures and his harsh edicts, which led to mass conversions, while criticizing his reversal of these persecutions (figs. 10 and 11).

CONCLUSION

This discussion of the razing of churches during the reign of al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah has illustrated a series of religious and political consistencies in the seemingly “psychotic” acts of this controversial ruler. The pivotal years of intense church destructions suggest a consistency in method, beyond the whims of an unstable mad man. They reveal a ruler responding to the very real challenges of his empire. While the early years of his reign were characterized by an attempt at Ismailization of the empire that was marked by persecutions of Christians and Sunnis alike, following the Sunni threat of the Abu Rakwa revolt, al-Hakim aimed to proclaim himself the ruler of the universally Islamic umma, and
thus made concessions to the Sunni threat of the Abu Rakwa revolt. By contrast, early in his reign, al-Hakim did not feel the need to diverge from the tradition of tolerance toward the public symbols of resident Christians. His large-scale destruction of Christian monuments may be seen in light of this shifting emphasis of the empire: when it became clear, following the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, that the church demolitions had strong popular support, they became part of a campaign to legitimate his rule. The destruction of churches, often accompanied by an Islamicization of the church site, can be understood as part of a common political and economic tactic—the use of urban renewal to employ and placate targeted populations. Certainly, this attempt to destroy Christian spaces in order to Islamicize his realms was by no means unique. Similar measures were carried out by the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847–61), who instituted similar sumptuary laws and ordered the destruction of Christian monuments, while also patronizing productive architectural projects.

While modern scholars deride the destruction of churches under al-Hakim, the medieval reality was considerably more complex. Rather than being evidence of his madness, al-Kirmani’s writings emphasize al-Hakim’s destruction of churches as proof of his legitimacy—as these acts were evidence of his “commanding the good and forbidding the bad,” a central prerogative of a medieval Islamic ruler. Ultimately, the destruction of churches under al-Hakim was consistent with a larger shift in public sectarian identity among the Fatimids—away from an esoteric form of Ismailism, adopted by a minority of medieval Muslims, toward one concerned with a puritanical adherence to Islamic law. Rather than being broadly destructive, the demolition of churches was accompanied by the construction of mosques, thereby suggesting that the program was part of a larger re-orientation of the city and empire. Al-Kirmani’s text suggests that the church destructions were part of a larger claim for legitimacy beyond the confines of the Fatimid empire, ultimately establishing al-Hakim’s caliphate as the legitimate rival to those in Córdoba and Baghdad.

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NOTES

6. Similar phenomena occur in portable objects, in which the image of Christ and a Coptic priest appears in luster ceramics, a hallmark medium of the Fatimids.
says firmly ‘al-Hakim was the worst caliph; no one worse ruled Egypt after the Pharaoh. Among his faults is that he was fickle in words and deeds; he destroyed the churches of Egypt then restored them, and destroyed the [Church of the Holy Sepulcher] then restored it.’ She also notes that Ibn al-Dawadar considers the prohibitions against Jews and Christians as ‘among the good religious deeds that al-Hakim did.’ Al-Qalqashandi summarizes the restrictions thusly: ‘He did well in what he did to them.’ Marlis J. Saleh, “Government Relations with the Coptic Community in Egypt during the Fatimid Period (358–567 A.H./969–1171 C.E.).” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1995), 250–51.

During the first few years of his reign, al-Hakim was essentially a puppet of his tutor, Barjawan. Following the defeat of Ibn ’Ammar in 387 (997), Barjawan became even more powerful, and was named wāṣiṭa (similar to a vizier). Barjawan then bestowed the honorific raʾis on his Coptic secretary, Christian Fahd b. Ibrahim, demonstrating that in the early years of al-Hakim’s reign, Christians continued to be incorporated into the Fatimid administration. It appears that Barjawan’s power eventually became a threat to al-Hakim, and the fifteen-year-old caliph ordered his execution in 1000. See al-Maqrizi, Iltiʾaż, 2:25–28. For a discussion, see Walker, Caliph of Cairo, 15–42 and 98–107.


’Atiyya, Maṣīḥ, and Burmester, History of the Patriarchs, 163–64.


The mosque known today in Cairo as “the mosque of al-Hakim” was called Masjid al-Anwar in medieval texts.

Al-Maqrizi notes that a dispute arose regarding whether the church had existed prior to the Muslim conquest of Egypt, suggesting a possible application of the tenets of the so-called Covenant of ʿUmar (to be discussed further below). Although the reigns of al-ʿAziz and al-Muʿizz are praised by modern scholars, their leniency toward the dhimmī communities was often met with fierce protest from the local communities. See Pruitt, “Fatimid Architectural Patronage,” 127–43; Jennifer Pruitt, “Miracle at Muqattam: Moving a Mountain to Build a Church in the Early Fatimid Caliphate (969–995),” in Sacred Precincts: Non-
Muslim Religious Sites in Islamic Territories, ed. Moham-
23. This follows early patterns in the foundation of Cairo, in
which the monastery of Dayr al-Khandaq was destroyed in
order to build the new city of al-Qahira, allowing the Chris-
tians to rebuild their structure outside the new Fatimid
24. For a discussion of sumptuary laws under al-Hakim, see
Saleh, “Government Relations with the Coptic Community”;
Marius Canard, ELZ, s.v. “Al-Hākim bi-Amr Allāh”;
Walker, Caliph of Cairo. For sumptuary laws for dhimmis,
see A. S. Tritton, The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Sub-
jects: A Critical Study of the Covenant of ʿUmar (London:
Oxford University Press, 1930); Albrecht Noth, “Abgren-
zungsprobleme zwischen Muslimen und Nicht-Muslimen.
Die ‘Bedingungen ʿUmar (āš-Šurūṭ al-ʿumariyya),” Jerusa-
Griffith, The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians
and Muslims in the World of Islam (Princeton, N.J.: Princeto-
ton University Press, 2010).
25. Al-Maqrizi, Ittīʿāz, 2:54. For further discussion, see Irene A.
Bierman, Writing Signs: The Fatimid Public Text (Berkeley:
University of California Press, 1998), 76–78, and Paula Sand-
ers, Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo (Albany:
State University of Albany Press, 1994), 52–57. For a con-
sideration of the aesthetic dimensions of the public text,
yee Yasser S. Tabbaa, The Transformation of Islamic Art during
the Sunni Revival (Seattle: University of Washington Press,
2001).
26. George Makdisi, Ibn ʿAqil et la résurgence de l’Islam tra-
ditionaliste au Xle siècle, Ve siècle de l’Hégire (Damascus:
Institut français de Damas, 1963), 312; Bierman, Writing Signs,
79–100.
28. Many medieval historical accounts discuss this event. See
especially al-Maqrizi, Ittīʿāz, 2:60–66. For an overview of
events, see Walker, Caliph of Cairo, 169–73. On the teaching
of the Koran, see Assaad, Reign of al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah,
135.
29. Both groups had been hostile to the Fatimids prior to
Abu Bakr’s rebellion. The Banu Qurra had previously
been oppressed by al-Hakim, while the Zanata had never
accepted the Fatimids as the rightful caliphate.
30. Yahya records that this was actually the entire reason for
Abu Bakr’s revolt. Given that the cursing occurred at
approximately the same time, it is unlikely that this event
was the single reason, but certainly, it must have been used
in Abu Bakr’s propaganda.
31. Assaad, Reign of al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, 140. It seems that
there were also economic forces at work, as both Barqa and
much of North Africa were experiencing economic hard-
ship at the time. For a discussion of the Abu Bakr revolt,
see also Sanders, Ritual, Politics, and the City, 57–60; Bloom,
“Mosque of al-Hakim”; and Yaacov Lev, State and Society in
Fatimid Egypt, Arab History and Civilization, Studies and
32. This edict would be repeated by al-Hakim several times
during his reign, suggesting that there were Shiʿi contingencies
within Cairo who continued this practice.
33. Al-Maqrizi, Ittīʿāz, 2:86.
34. This shift is also seen in the changes in architectural proj-
ects and urban ceremonial practices. See Pruitt, “Fatimid
Architectural Patronage,” 202–73.
35. Ibid., 62–143.
36. See Saleh, “Government Relations with the Coptic Commu-
ity,” 82–85.
37. For a recent study on the Holy Sepulcher, see Colin Mor-
ris, The Sepulchre of Christ and the Medieval West: From the
Beginning to 1600 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
It is this centrally planned construction, executed around
a rock outcropping, that was echoed in the construction
of the Dome of the Rock by ʿAbd al-Malik in 692–93. See
Oleg Grabar, The Formation of Islamic Art (New Haven:
Yale University Press, 1973 and 1987), and Rina Avner, “The
Dome of the Rock in Light of the Development of Concent-
trated Martyria in Jerusalem: Architecture and Architectural
38. For a reconstruction of the fourth-century monument, see
Hugue Vincent and F.-M. Abel, Jérusalem nouvelle: Fasci-
cule 1 et 2, Aelia Capitolina, le Saint-Sepulcre et le Mont
des Oliviers (Paris: Victor Lecoffre, 1914); Virgilio Corbo, Il
Santo Sepolcro di Gerusalemme: Aspetti archeologici dalle
origini al periodo crociato, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Franciscan
Print Press, 1981–82). For an image of a bread mould repres-
enting the monuments of Golgotha, see George Galavisar,
Bread and the Liturgy: The Symbolism of Early Christian and
Byzantine Bread Stamps (Madison: University of Wiscon-
sin Press, 1970); Richard Krautheimer, Early Christian and
Byzantine Architecture, 4th ed. rev. by Richard Krautheimer
and Slobodan Ćurčić. (New Haven: Yale University Press,
1986), 63.
39. The original church would have been substantially altered
even by the time of the Fatimids, as Jerusalem was sacked
and the church burned by the Persians in 614. For an
account of the early church, see Kenneth J. Conant, “The
Original Buildings at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem,”
40. This account is translated in Saint Adamnan, The Pilgrim-
nage of Arcurfio in the Holy Land, about the Year A.D. 670,
trans. and annot. James Rose Macpherson, Palestine Pil-
grims’ Text Society 3 (London: Palestine Pilgrims’ Text
Society, 1889).
41. Quoted in F. E. Peters, Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes
of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days
of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times (Princeton,
43. The use of architecture as a competitive discourse in Jerusa-
lem was also emphasized by al-Muqaddasi, who suggested
that ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 685–705) and al-Walid (r. 705–15)
constructed the lavish programs at the Dome of the Rock
and the Great Mosque of Damascus in direct response to
the preexisting Christian monuments. For a discussion of competitive discourse in Umayyad buildings, see Grabar, Formation of Islamic Art, 61.


45. One of the most provocative theories regarding the church’s destruction was that offered by William of Tyre, a twelfth-century resident of Jerusalem, who suggested that al-Hakim demolished the church to counter rumors that he was a Christian, on account of his Christian mother. William of Tyre, A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea, trans. and ed. Emily A. Babcock and A. C. Krey (New York: Columbia University, 1943). Ultimately, it is unlikely that al-ʿAziz’s Christian wife was indeed al-Hakim’s mother. While his conclusion may be flawed, William of Tyre’s analysis suggests the importance of clarifying religious identity during al-Hakim’s reign. It also serves as a reminder of just how intertwined the early Fatimid caliphs were with the Christian power structure—William of Tyre notes that a member of the Fatimid royal family had recently served as the patriarch of Jerusalem. Whether or not this figure was a blood relative, the fact remains that al-Hakim’s destruction of churches firmly distanced his rule from the contested interfaith alliances of his predecessors, something that was still resonant in the Crusader-occupied Jerusalem of William’s time.


47. The disdain for the Church in medieval Muslim thought is evidenced in the medieval nomenclature used to reference it: the term al-Qumāma (“the trash heap”) is often adopted in place of al-Qiyāma (“the Resurrection”).

48. For a further consideration of Muslim-Christian relations, see Griffith, Church in the Shadow of the Mosque.

49. Saleh, “Government Relations with the Coptic Community,” 82–85; Yahyā al-Antākī, Histoire de Yahya ibn-Saʿīd d’Antioche (1932), 195–96. It seems that the Egyptian Christians had warned the Jerusalem patriarch about the attack and as a result many of the most precious objects had been removed. A Western medieval source alludes to the wealth of the church when Benedict suggests that in the year 1000 Charles came to the holy city and “adorned the holy place with gold and jewels, and he also placed on it a large gold standard.” As quoted in Peters, Jerusalem, 217.


51. Ibid., 147.

52. Ibid., 108.


54. Abū ʿSālih, Churches and Monasteries, 130.

55. Ibid., 219.

56. Ibid., 282.

57. Christian sources often point to the conversion of Muslims to Christianity as the main reason that al-Hakim punished the dhīmmīs. William of Tyre’s description highlights the importance of religious identity in the medieval world. Moreover, the story of Ibn Raga in the History of the Patriarchs reveals the high stakes involved in medieval conversion. My theory that al-Hakim was trying to appeal to universal Islamic goals is supported by the fact that under his reign we find many indications of Christians and Jews converting, or pretending to convert, to Islam. However, it does not appear that they converted to Shiʿī Islam, particularly since the majority Sunni population protested widely when the Christians were allowed to reconvert. Yahya al-Antakī noted that al-Hakim relied heavily on Christians and Jews in his administration, but he also tried to convert them. Ultimately, whether al-Hakim destroyed churches for popular appeal, financial gain, caliphal ambition, religious fervor, or a combination of all of these, it is clear that such actions received broad popular support.


62. Translated in ibid., 228.

63. Al-Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ, 265.

64. At the time, the Abbasid Empire itself was defined by complicated sectarian divisions and allegiances, as the Sunni Abbasids were controlled by their Shiʿī Buyid viziers. The conflict between the Sunnis and Shiʿa, as seen in the Fatimid context, was just as complicated, if not more so, in Baghdad.
65. This manifesto has also altered later historical works, which accept its contestation of Fatimid genealogy and make it difficult to determine the precise historical circumstances of the beginning of the Fatimid Empire. Ultimately, the anti-Fatimid treatises by the Abbāsids at this time became inextricably part of later Sunni histories on the Fatimids, making it particularly difficult to ascertain accurate information on the dynasty.


67. Paul Walker, Master of the Age: An Islamic Treatise on the Necessity of the Imamate; A Critical Edition of the Arabic Text and English Translation of Hamid al-Dīn Ahmad b. ’Abd Allāh al-Kirmānī’s al-Maṣābīḥ fī ʾīthbāṭ al-imāma (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 118. Once again, the precise dates of this work are not known. It was most likely completed between 1011 and 1015, while al-Kirmani was in Iraq. However, it is likely that al-Kirmani adapted it from writings and thoughts prior to this. Therefore, the text can be considered as both a reflection of and reaction to the Fatimid developments outlined above, including al-Hakim’s increasingly harsh edicts, his destruction of churches, and his simultaneous growing popularity in some regions of the Islamic world and within Egypt itself. On one hand, the text may be conceived as an outline of al-Hakim’s vision for the caliphate; on the other, it is an apology for his acts. In either case, it offers a fascinating insight into the dynamics of sectarian relations in this period.

68. Although the Buyids themselves were Shiʿi, they did not recognize the Fatimid ruler as the living imam and instead supported the Sunni Abbāsids caliph in Baghdad.

69. These “false imams” include “Ahmad b. Ishaq (al-Qadir), al-Haruni (al-Muʿayyad billah), the Zaydi imam in Hawsam in Gilan; Umar al-Nazwani, the Ibadi imam in Oman; the Umayyad ruler in Spain and the Magrib; and the leaders of the Qarmati remnant in al-Ahsa,” as well as the expected Hidden Imam of Twelver Shiʿism. Walker, Master of the Age, 114.

70. Al-Kirmani writes, “He who has the august authority, glorious kingship, established proof, sword unsheathed in support of Islam, commands the good and forbids the bad, applies the corporeal punishments, preserves the borders, cares for the populace, revives the sunna, safeguards society, endeavors to conduct the holy war, shatters the opposition, extends justice and mercy, without having to mention the condition of the designation and appointment and the nobility of universal high regards, is al-Hakim bi-amr Allah. From that it follows that he is the imam, fealty to whom is incumbent on them and obedience to him is required of them.” Walker, Master of the Age, 114.

71. Ibid., 114.

72. On the Covenant of ’Umar, see Tritton, Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects; Noth, “Abgrenzungsprobleme zwischen Muslimen und Nicht-Muslimen”; and Yohanan Friedmann, Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). While the precise dates of the codification of this pact are debated, Griffith notes that it seems to have “reached its classical form” by the ninth century. Griffith, Church in the Shadow of the Mosque, 15.

73. Tritton, Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects, 5–6.


75. Al-Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāz, 2135.

76. The text reads “The dhimmīs must be made to observe the conditions laid down for them in the treatise on jizya written for them by ‘Umar b. al-Khattab, and must be made to wear the ghīyār. If he is a Jew, he should put a red or yellow cord on his shoulder; if a Christian, he should tie a zuṅnār around his waist and hang a cross around his neck; if a woman, she should wear two slippers, one of which is white and the other black. When a protected person goes to the baths, he must wear a steel, copper or lead neckband to distinguish him from other people. The muḥtasib should stop them from riding horses and carrying weapons and swords. When they ride mules, they should do so with side saddles. Their buildings should not be higher than those of the Muslims nor should they preside over meetings. They should not jostle Muslims on the main roads, but should rather use the side streets. They should not be the first to give a greeting, nor be welcomed in meetings. The muḥtasib must stipulate that they offer hospitality to any Muslim who passes by and give him lodging in their houses and places of worship. They must not be allowed to display any alcoholic drinks or pigs, to recite the Torah or Bible openly, to ring the church bells, to celebrate their festivals or to hold funeral services in public. All this was stipulated by ‘Umar b. al-Khattab in his treatise, so the muḥtasib must keep an eye on their affairs regarding these things and force them to comply”: in Shayzārī, Book of the Islamic Market Inspector, trans. and ed. Buckley, 121–22. The manual also includes other acts of al-Hakim, such as prohibiting women from lamenting or wailing at funeral ceremonies, and in fact, discouraging them from attending burials altogether (p. 127); cf. al-Hakim’s acts of 1013, in al-Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāz, 233–94. Earlier, though less extensive hisba manuals are preserved in Umayyad Spain. See Claude Cahen, EI2, s.v. “Hisba.”


79. Cook, Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong, 302.

80. ‘Atṭiya, Maṣīḥ, and Burmester, History of the Patriarchs, 205.
The source ascribes many of these reversals to al-Hakim’s personal relationship with a monk named Bimin, a convert to Islam who had returned to Christianity and asked the caliph for permission to construct a monastery in Sahran, outside of Mīṣr. After the construction of this structure, al-Hakim visited the monasteries on his nightly outings, staying with and conversing with the monks. According to the account, al-Hakim and Bimin the monk became friends, and arranged for the release of the patriarch Zacharius and the reconstruction of the churches. The text also links al-Hakim’s increasing asceticism to the influence of Christian clergy, as the caliph remarks that the community reveres the patriarch, even though he is dressed humbly. ’Āṭiyya, Maṣḥīḥ, and Burmester, History of the Patriarchs, 208.

For a discussion of these events, see Walker, Caliph of Cairo, 239–61.

Saleh, “Government Relations with the Coptic Community,” 250–51.
The Sephardic poet and moralist Samuel Usque seemed pleasantly surprised when he first set eyes on Salonica (Thessaloniki). His three-part book, *Consolação às tribulações de Israël*, published in Portuguese in Ferrara in 1553, documents the significant trials of the Sephardic diaspora in adjusting to their new homes in Amsterdam, Vilnius, Nimes, Bari, Otranto, and Hamburg, to name a few of the locales in which they had recently settled. After an eastbound tour beginning in Amsterdam, he states "the Jews of Europe and other countries, persecuted and banished, have come here to find refuge, and the city [Salonica] has received them with love and affection, as if she were Jerusalem, that old and pious mother of ours." Usque’s depiction of a harmonious and cosmopolitan scene of Jewish life in Salonica is evocative of the privileged role the city has played in more recent Ottoman, early modern, and Jewish historiography. Salonica’s Jews were the third in a triad of religious groups living contently together in this important yet still understudied Mediterranean city. Salonica’s cultural polyvalency is able to operate at a nexus of several critical historiographic concerns—from pluralist societies and the development of intercultural tolerance to geographic peripheries and second- (or even third-) order urban centers.

To be sure, there was a Jewish presence in Salonica much earlier than Usque’s sixteenth-century account. In the realm of legend, one may cite an account of the founding of Salonica preserved in the writing of the seventeenth-century Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi: the first builder of the city of [Salonica] was the prophet Solomon. There he built a huge palace, the traces of which are visible to this day. The prophet Solomon lived in [Salonica] for many years.

More significant, however, is Paul’s First Epistle to the Thessalonians, in which he reports the presence of Hellenized Jews in the city in about 52 B.C. Hungarian Jews arrived in the thirteenth century, living alongside Romaniote Jews. After Murad II (r. 1421–44, 1446–51) captured Salonica in 1430, the city’s Jewish population declined, leaving none when cadastral surveys (*tahrīr defterleri*) were taken in 1478. This was the result of the Ottoman policy of *sürgün*, or deportation, referring to the transfer of non-Muslim populations from within the empire to Istanbul, including significant numbers of other Jews from the Balkans and Anatolia. With the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492 under Ferdinand and Isabella’s Alhambra decree, Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512) was presented with the opportunity to welcome considerable numbers of highly talented immigrants, most notably in the fields of medicine, banking, and publishing (fig. 1).

Although no explicit directive from 1492 exists in Ottoman records, a chronicler later documents orders that the sultan sent to the provincial governors of Salonica instructing them to warmly welcome the Jewish populations under the aegis of the *dhimma* (the covenant of protection between an Islamic state and members of Koranically recognized religious communities living within its boundaries). Within just a few years, the Sephardim were joined by other Jewish refugees, in particular Ashkenazim from Austria, Transylvania, and Hungary. By 1519, a mere twenty-seven years
after the expulsion, Jews represented a remarkable 56 percent of Salonica’s population, rendering the city the most diverse Jewish center in Europe, as well as the nexus of the Sephardic diaspora.7

The impetus for an investigation of, in particular, the Sephardic thread in Salonica’s material history is two-fold. On the one hand, traditional histories of Ottoman multiculturalism have focused on the political and, to a lesser extent, economic ramifications of the millet “system,” which established, after the fall of Constantinople, national corporations with written charters that provided certain benefits to minority populations. Recent historiography has been critical of the facile tendency to infer that the millet system was the pre-modern practice of enlightened religious pluralism.8 The millet “system” was anything but systematic and is more plausibly characterized as an ad hoc, semi-organized framework9 for preventing certain multiethnic communities from becoming cultural powder kegs and thus problematic for the Porte.

The stopgap nature of this framework and the improvisational tactics it implies have yet to be sufficiently transposed to Jewish material culture in the Ottoman Empire in general and Salonica in particular. Life for the Jews of Salonica may not have been as easy as Usque saw and depicted in his short visit; neither was it uniformly a product of millet social organization ipso facto. As but one counterexample to the notion that the early

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Fig. 1. Map illustrating Sephardic immigration after 1492. The Ottoman terms for Thessaloniki, Adrianople, and Smyrna are, respectively, Salonica, Edirne, and Izmir. (Map: C. Scott Walker, Harvard Map Collection, Harvard College Library)
community’s coherence may have begun as early as 1648, when many of its members were gripped by a messianic movement. The rise of the dönme (practitioners of a Sabbateanist crypto-Judaism) in the seventeenth century and an increase in Kabbalistic studies among the Salonican Sephardic community in the seventeenth and eighteenth century resulted in a number of corrosive effects such as secrecy, paranoia, and apocalyptic thinking that rendered the greater Sephardic cultural unit discordant and largely unintelligible by the early nineteenth century.12 This discordance was only further accelerated by additional events of the nineteenth century, including the Tanzimat reforms and the Hattı Hümayun of 1856, a decree which declared the unqualified parity of the empire’s Muslim and non-Muslim subjects.

Historians documenting early modern aspects of Sephardic Salonica have tended toward histories that illustrate how the city’s Sephardim, along with other Jews, staked their place in the Ottoman economic, social, and political systems. Less consideration has been given towards the literal places and things they forged in their new Ottoman context. From the Holy Land to Spain to Salonica, tracing the material nature of this Sephardic population provides an opportunity to embellish an already rich history that makes good on a Braudelian concept of Mediterraneity, examining its colors, textures, and spatial configurations.

Yet perhaps more importantly, and certainly more synthetically, the Sephardic entrée into Salonica can and should be considered in the context of two millennia of Jewish encounters with the Mediterranean littoral. From regular trade and contact with officials of the court of King Solomon, through a longstanding and largely peaceful coexistence with Moorish and Christian populations in Spain prior to 1492, the Sephardic population of Salonica invokes a non-national yet remarkably cogent and variegated demographic group whose identity is linked more to the Mediterranean than it is to any other place. From the convivencia of Iberia to the manner in which they lived under the Ottomans, Sephardim continued on a Mediterranean journey of both hardship and remarkable assimilability.11

This investigation is bookended on one side by the Alhambra decree of 1492 and on the other by the advent of the nineteenth century, a period that marked the end of Sephardic cultural ascendancy in both Salonica as well as the Ottoman Empire at large. The erosion of the
matic areas of concentration are not arbitrary but rather demonstrate the earliest and most open windows the Sephardim found in their effort to penetrate, change, and assimilate into the Salonican and Ottoman surroundings in which they now found themselves. The interdependence of these facets of Salonican Sephardic life as forms of creative production may not be immediately evident, yet these variegated aspects and scales of material output do speak to what the Sephardim, as both a whole entity and a collection of subgroups with particular vested interests, sought to and could produce, actualize, and forge. Their creative output also demonstrates how much they were allowed to infiltrate an Ottoman visual culture that continued to wrestle with its own concepts of religious, cultural, and aesthetic autonomy. It is my hope that these vignettes will actually lead to a more holistic understanding of what the apex of Sephardic life in Salonica quite literally looked like, as I simultaneously attempt to furnish propositions as to how this landscape related to its highly consequential urban, Ottoman, and Mediterranean contexts.

CASTING THE DYE: ASPECTS OF FABRIC, WOOL PRODUCTION, AND GARB

Sephardic influence on Salonican material culture is best documented in the sphere of the wool trade, which these new immigrants to the city overhauled after their arrival in 1492. As had occurred in other centers of the Sephardic diaspora, the Jews from Iberia almost immediately assumed a prominent role in the economic life of the city. In Salonica, this was made most manifest through the production of wool and its attendant industries. The study of woolen goods in Jewish life is typically limited to the realms of the home and synagogue, including Torah ark curtains, Torah mantles, and Torah binders, as well as bedspreads, reader desk covers, and prayer rugs.13

Before elaborating upon the importance of the wool industry, it is important to juxtapose it with the production and use of non-woolen fabrics, most importantly silks, few of which still remain due to the difficulty in conserving them. The oldest surviving fabric of Jewish Salonica appears to be an eighteenth-century Torah ark curtain (fig. 2). The composition of this Torah ark curtain, like those of many others, centers on the depiction of two columns supporting grillwork and a sizable hanging lamp. The columns recall the sinewy twisting of Bernini’s Baldacchino di San Pietro (1623–33). Embroidered with metal thread and satin stitch, this Torah ark curtain required considerable handicraft.

This piece is also notable for its compositional similarities to woolen synagogue rugs produced in other Ottoman cities, such as a surviving example of a seventeenth-century synagogue rug from Cairo (fig. 3), which recalls the nearly identical architectural motifs found in Islamic prayer rugs being produced in Anatolia, particularly in the workshops of Bursa. In this case, the typical formation of the mihrab has given way to an arch that deviates from the cusped or horseshoe arches generally found in known Iberian synagogues. Nonetheless,
and brought to Salonica. This proximate wool supply was supplemented by wool from other parts of Macedonia, Albania, Morea, Euboea, Thessaly, and Thrace. Locales as disparate as Sofia, Larissa, Lepanto, and Plovdiv all have records of funnelling local raw wool to Salonica.

As Braude has explained, regional weaving techniques had until then remained fairly crude since Byzantine times, despite the high quality of the wool, which was comparable to that available to the Sephardim in Iberia. As in Iberia, it seems as though the pigmenting of raw wool was of major importance in the art of wool production. All evidence suggests that in addition to perfecting undisputedly sophisticated weaving techniques (already some of the finest in Europe), the Sephardim in Salonica promoted the importance of dyeing wool and thus enriched the palette of ordinary wardrobe and interiors with more brilliant and varied colors. Their base palette consisted of the primary colors of red, blue, and yellow, derived from madder root, kermes, indigo, and yellow-seed, which in the correct proportional mixtures could create the full range of hues.

Madder root, or *rubia tinctorum*, was the most readily available—produced in the district of Boeotia in Thebes, a three- to four-day journey from Salonica, near Izmir (Smyrna). Kermes, or *coccus ilicis*, was derived from an insect common to oak trees in the Mediterranean region and could be found in Livadia, a five- to seven-day journey from Salonica. Both madder and kermes produced red pigments. Numerous accounts reveal that madder was behind the creation of the colorfast “Turkish red” of which European travelers were so envious. The term *kermes*, which is etymologically related to the English word *crimson* and common to Arabic, Turkish, and Persian alike, yielded a very prized hue of scarlet, known to be popular in Ottoman silks and woolens. Yellow-seed, or *rhamnus catharicus*, was found in the berry of the buckthorn plant. The color was notorious for fading quickly, but it was also the cheapest of the dyes.

Indigo, the only one of the four primary dyes that did not come from the lands of Rūm, became the one most commonly imported into the city by the early fifteenth century, which implies that blue-toned fabrics had begun to surpass red ones in popularity in Salonican
wool production after the arrival of the Sephardim. It is a substance derived from the powder of plants in the genus *indigofera*, which Maqrizi notes was cultivated in Egypt, as one can see reflected in the deeper tones of the rugs from Cairene workshops. Despite this, Salonica’s indigo appears to have derived mostly from India by way of Western Europe. It was not until the Ottomans developed an overland trade route for indigo from Lahore to Aleppo that Salonica would be able to obtain the dye from the East at much less cost, a development that coincided roughly with the arrival of the Sephardim in Salonica. Whether by boat or by means of the Via Egnatia, the pigments would have arrived in the city directly through the Jewish quarter by virtue of its central location adjacent to the city’s port and its straddling of the main east–west thoroughfare (an urban corridor of the Via Egnatia). Besides indigo, none of these pigments were of the same organic constitution as that available to the Sephardic wool producers in Iberia, and thus the Sephardic wool dyers would have had to recalibrate all of their chromatic formulas based on the new versions they were using.

Four types of woollen cloths were produced by Jews in Salonica. Kersey was the lightest and least expensive variety, a coarse and narrow weave that Braude has likened to the kerseys of Hampshire, England, which were produced at the same time, and were similar to the weave known today as jersey. The next grade of wool was *sobremanos*, of a wider loom than kersey and of a “superfine” nature. The Sephardic weavers used a green *sobremanos* when given the important task of producing a good number of the imperial janissarial uniforms, which I shall discuss below. Yet one grade higher was Salonica broadcloth, a plain-weave fabric, fulled, napped, and sheared, and available at various lengths.

The most coveted fabric was that dubbed *pano de cuenta*, meaning roughly, in both its Ladino and Hebrew derivations, “fabric of calculation.” The term *cuenta* (calculation), Braude has suggested, may also refer to the city of Cuenca, a prominent Castilian textile center. The techniques for producing *pano de cuenta* varied but the price of the fabric, nearly three times that of Salonica broadcloth, remained largely consistent. If it is indeed true that the name of the fabric was related to the Castilian city, it seems probable that it was the émigrés of Castile who monopolized the production of *pano de cuenta* wool.

S. M. Imamuddin describes the production of wool in medieval Castile thusly:

In the 12th century Idrisi speaks of a flourishing wool industry in Chinchilla, fifty miles from Murcia, and in Cuenca (Cuenca), two days journey from Chinchilla. Wool was also a staple industry in the mountains of Toledo, where sheep were reared in abundance and exported all over the county. Good-quality wool was raised on the Shashin island, where women rubbed it with pig-fat and made it gleaming white or turquoise blue. In Santaren a kind of wool was obtained from a marine animal, probably Abu Qalmun. This wool was of a very bright golden colour and used in making expensive dresses. This reveals a preference in the Castilian wool industry for fabrics that were white and shades of blue and gold, which is substantiated by the rapid increase in the importation of indigo to Salonica after 1492. It would seem particularly likely, then, that the *pano de cuenta* wools were characterized by hues of blue, from light indigo to nearly black, and that the color blue itself may have distinguished Castilian Sephardim from their fellow Iberians.

It is also important to keep in mind the relative insularity of the wool industry in Castile immediately before émigrés from that region arrived in Salonica. As a result, it is possible to understand not only how the industry was transposed to Ottoman lands but also how both the state of Ottoman trade and the natural resources of Macedonia may have actually altered the nature of Sephardic woolens more broadly.

In 1438, Juan II of Spain requested, in response to a petition known as the *Cortes*, that the export of Castilian wool be halted and that the import of foreign wool be banned. According to Joseph O’Callaghan, The Castilian weavers obviously wanted to reserve for themselves good, cheap, raw wool, but the Mesta [a union of sheep ranchers] opposed their petition because the sheep-raisers were anxious to sell their product at the highest price on the international market. For the moment, the king sided with [the weavers], but in 1462 Enrique IV allowed the export of only one-third of the total production of raw wool; this represented a triumph for the native woolen industry.
The Jews of Burgos, in Aragon, from which this Bible hails, were far fewer in number in comparison with those from Castile, directly to their south. As evidenced by the dark hues of red and black, and the golden shade of the stem, the color palette outside of Castile seemed to make less use of the indigos and whites noted by Imamuddin. However, the central stem, the micrography, and the scrolling all appear in the synagogues of Toledo, which suggests that formal motifs among Sephardic woolens may have been similar, while color schema varied from region to region. Both palettes share the distinct gold and red that characterize so much of pan-Iberian heraldry and medieval imagery of the time, which I shall reflect more upon shortly.

As the highest-end fabric available on the Ottoman market (apart from silk), panó de cuenta wool provides an interesting window into the historical evolution of Jewish wool production. It also functions as a measure of the assimilation of the Castilian weavers into Salonica’s upper middle class, to the extent that one can be identified. It seems quite possible that the less profitable production of kerseys, sobremanos, and Salonica broadcloth relegated non-Castilian Sephardim to a slightly lower economic level, and that the more common woolens were less likely to have been white and hues of blue in comparison with the Castilian-based panó de cuenta.

As the caliph was also the protector of the Holy Word of the Prophet, the early Ottoman Empire has been characterized by some as a novel experiment in a relatively egalitarian form of governance that rejected the caste and monarchical systems of its eastern and western neighbors. This, compounded with the Muslim disinclination for the “dirty trades” of banking and diplomacy, left the perceivedly entrepreneurial Sephardim with a plethora of opportunities. But it is also important to keep in mind that the supposed opportunities of this egalitarianism were not universal. The Koran did enforce hierarchies: those of master and slave, man and woman, and believer and non-believer. Only the latter was thought to be volitional, and while millet protection was largely secure, Ottoman Jews were nonetheless the source of considerable suspicion and fear. Jewish women, unable to become men and highly unlikely to become Muslim, were thus operating under the double imprint of Jewish and Ottoman law and thus
situated in a societal station where *millet* benefits were doubly negated by the less tangible phobia of Jews in general and the expected subordination of women in particular. This station, potentially revealing something as to the precarious threshold of tolerance and discrimination, merits additional examination.

It has been argued that Jewish women of certain ancestral groups in Salonica and Istanbul wore dress “similar in design and fabric to contemporary European or Italian clothes,” a practice put an end to by sultanic decree by the end of eighteenth century. Prior to this, the attire of Ottoman Muslim and Jewish women would have been virtually indistinguishable, apart from their headgear.44 The dress of Sephardic women had been characterized by robes, chemises, and long *şalvar* trousers.45

A 1568 woodcut by the geographer Nicolas de Nicolay, entitled “Jewish Maiden from Adrianople,” illustrates an “hebrezza” from Edirne (as the city is known in Turkish) in a floral outfit, though it is difficult to determine whether she is wearing very baggy *şalvar* trousers or more traditional European dress. Nevertheless, the presence of a central hem with branching scrolls is reminiscent of the formal arrangement of the Burgos carpet page, indicating that the stem and scroll may have become codified decorative and organizational motifs popular in other designs in addition to religious ones (fig. 5). The motifs adorning the dress of the Jewish woman of Edirne also appear to be similar to those seen on the cloth fabrics depicted in myriad late medieval Iberian paintings.

A picture of an eighteenth-century Sephardic woman demonstrates the normalization of Sephardic fashion into a more Ottoman mode. For formal occasions, she wears a very long and wide-sleeved silk shift called a *kamiza* (in Ladino), several varieties of which were so fine as to be nearly transparent (fig. 6).46 According to the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, her ordinary attire would have been made of cotton or linen, with narrow sleeves and visible *şalvar* trousers and, occasionally, a lace bib.47 The dress of this late eighteenth-century woman differed from that of her predecessors not only in its more varied color palette but also in its motifs. It appears that wool had been banished altogether.

Fewer images exist of Sephardic men, but the following account from the Bohemian traveler Hans Dernschwam is revealing:

In Turkey you will find in every town innumerable Jews of all countries and languages. And every Jewish group sticks together in accordance with its language...As is their custom, everyone wears clothes in accordance with the language he speaks. Usually the garments are long, just like those of the Wallachians, the Turks, and the Greeks, too—that is, a caftan. This is a long tunic, tied about at the waist, over which is a sort of skirt made of cloth of good quality and silk. Just as the Turks wear white turbans, the Jews wear yellow. Some foreign Jews still wear the black Italian birettas. Some who pretend to be physicians or surgeons wear the red-pointed, elongated birettas.48

All of this would change in 1580, when the sultan decreed that the Jews wear red hats like their “forebears.”49
The decree makes no distinction among Jewish groups nor does it specify the exact hat being prescribed. An example of a “supposed” physician can be seen in a 1574 watercolor entitled “A Jewish merchant and doctor in ottoman dress” (fig. 7). The doctor and his companion are both wearing black caftans that are open down the center front and cut at the elbows. Beneath, they both wear robes, the physician’s blue and the companion’s beige. The caftans appear to be lined in red fabric. It is not clear which elements are made of wool and which of silk, but the embroidered, patterned designs of the women’s dress described above are nowhere to be found. It is the physician who is wearing a blue robe—which may indicate that the fabric is *pano de cuenta* wool—a reflection of his elevated standing in society. In another illustration from the late eighteenth century, we see a rabbi garbed in a deep blue dress, illustrating the less colorful attire of the clergy and also indicating the potential use of *pano de cuenta* for important religious figures (fig. 8).

Yet another illustration depicts a Sephardic man of Salonica from the mid-eighteenth-century (fig. 9). Again, according to the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, his clothes would have consisted of knee-length knickers of linen or light wool, known as a *pernil*, an undershirt known as a *kamiza*, and, in winter, another shirt over this made of heavier wool, known as a *kamis*. Visible on top is an *antari* robe of striped silk or bur-
nished cotton, made of raw weaves from Aleppo or Lahore. Gone were the simple days of muted, single-color garments made in town.

Braude has suggested that the wool commissioned from the Salonican Sephardim for the janissaries was most typically green *sobremanos*. One of the most proximate color renderings of janissary garb appears in a drawing entitled “Ottoman janissaries and the defending Knights of St. John, Siege of Rhodes” (fig. 10). This image features janissaries and *solaks* (imperial guards) alternately bedecked in hues of green, red, indigo, and yellow. Their garments are largely unadorned, and of particular note is the pairing of green and red in alternate layerings of pants and short-sleeved overcoats. This garb is remarkably similar to that seen in Lokman’s well-known and contemporaneous depiction of the “Siege of Vienna by Süleyman the Magnificent” (fig. 11). As they engage in a battle on the other side of the empire, we note the remarkable consistency in the uniforms worn by the janissaries, most notably the recurring green–red pairing. Note the difference in the length of the uniforms, most likely an adaptation to the colder climes of Central Europe.

One might speculate that the influence of Sephardic weavers was most evident in the sixteenth century, as it was steadily normalized by sultanic decrees such as the one from 1580 already mentioned. Moreover, as knowledge of European fashion accelerated in the eighteenth century, we can see how the distinct character of Sephardic attire, particularly that of Sephardic men, may have been both transformed and subsumed into a
As the Inquisition gripped Spain and then Portugal, the Jews of Iberia were forced to convert to Christianity (though they sometimes continued to practice their original religion in secret [crypto-Judaism]); many others were killed, although about half of the Sephardic population in Spain around 1492 were able to flee the country. Traces of their presence in Spain were largely stamped out. All they could take to their new homes in Europe and the Mediterranean was what they could bear on their persons; thus, portable goods like fabrics codified Sephardic identity in perpetuity.

As has been argued with wool, it is probable that this codification came simply through color schema by way of the art of pigmenting, which the Sephardim had already mastered in Iberia. Medieval heraldry and flags in general demonstrated the large role played by color schema in signifying cultural groups. The Ottoman system was no different. As Nicolas de Nicolay recounts of Salonican Jewry:

Their headgear is a saffron yellow turban. That of the Greek Christians is blue, and that of the Turks is pure white so that by the difference in colour they may be known apart.51

While Nicolay’s 1568 account indicates color schemes for the three groups of the Salonican populace, it is important to question whether this delineation, at least within the Jewish population, occurred voluntarily and immediately upon arrival in 1492 or was a result of an increase in sultanic decrees on dress. Moreover, it is interesting to postulate to what extent the qualities of an Ottoman-Jewish color scheme, with yellow as the key color, were the product of will as opposed to, or in tandem with, law.

As has been noted in the discussion of green sobremanos and the attire of the janissaries and solaks, the red-green schema appears to be by far the most striking in the Sephardic Salonican chromatic output. The 1482 manuscript Rimado de la Conquista de Granada (Rhyme of the Conquest of Granada) offers some suggestions as to why. On one page from the manuscript we see Philip I (r. 1506) and his wife Joanna of Castile meeting with their subjects (fig. 12). The composition of
This color pairing is suggested to be particular to the Aragon-Castilian region in two additional sources: a 1495 painting entitled *Santo Domingo y los Albigenses* by the Spanish painter Pedro Berruguete, and the circa 1400 wall motifs of the El Tránsito Synagogue in Toledo. In Berrugete’s painting, Saint Dominic presides over the burning of the heretical texts of the Albigensian Catharists (a Manichean Christian sect) (fig. 14). Both the book in the fire and those about to be tossed in (or repelling a thrust towards the fire) have covers of similar shades of red and green. The main feature of the El Tránsito Synagogue of Toledo, which I shall discuss more briefly, is its florid, diamond-patterned wall with a chromatic substrate of red and green nearly identical to that seen in the painting.
I would like to suggest here that the red–green pairing is an important one, particularly as it is echoed in the post-expulsion wool production of Salonica. Although it may not be unique to the Sephardic population, its diadic continuity and resonance in both Christian and Jewish artistic production in Iberia before the expulsion but not after suggests that its promulgation as a color scheme was probably linked to the Sephardim.

There is another intriguing and specifically Mediterranean genealogy that may link the Sephardim to a unique orange hue that appears in Italy, eventually arriving in all corners of Europe in the form of the lustrous varnish coating of the famed Stradivari violin. Finlay contends that the rise of the violin in the Italian city of Cremona reveals something of Sephardic chromatic sensibilities. She notes how the instrument-making tradition came to full fruition through the master craftsmanship of lutes produced by a Sephardic man named Giovanni Leonardo da Martinengo. Martinengo arrived in Cremona in 1499, which indicates that he had likely spent the years between 1492 and 1499 traveling. Upon settling in Cremona, he taught his craft to his two brothers, Andrea and Giovanni Antonio Amati. According to Finlay, it was Andrea who fashioned one of the first violins, after a man in the nearby town of Brescia “decided to take a bow to the lute-guitar and play it like an Arabic rebab rather than plucking it.” Andrea’s grandson Niccolò taught the craft to Antonio Stradivari, who became the first major producer of violins, circulating his iterations of the instrument across Europe in the latter half of the seventeenth century.

In an effort to postulate the chemical roots of Stradivari’s lustrous and wholly unique orange varnish—namely, safflower, madder, and brasiliwood—Finlay suggests that Martinengo brought the special coloring techniques with him from Spain to Italy, supplementing them with pigments acquired on his seven years of travel through the Mediterranean before settling in Cremona. This would include the safflower pigments available in the bazaars of Tunis, Tripoli, and Algiers, as well as the previously mentioned madder found in the Ottoman Empire. Finlay also supposes that while in Constantinople Martinengo picked up brasiliwood originating from the East Indies; this was the source of the third and final hue required to create the varnish pigment that sealed countless lutes and violins for over three centuries.

In reflecting upon the green–red diad and the orange varnish of the Stradivari violin, one may conceive of color itself as yet another form of Mediterranean transmission. A particularly nimble artistic tool, color can be seen as both rooted to place in its peculiar organic composition and able to transpose and transmute itself along with an itinerant population such as the Sephardim.
THE SYNAGOGUE: IMAGINING SPACE, FEMALE WORSHIP, AND THE MOTHER REGION

Much can be gleaned from medieval Iberian Jewish manuscripts about Judaic iconography (or aniconography) and the built realm of the Sephardim, particularly the synagogue.\(^{55}\) As Katrin Kogman-Appel has pointed out, two different worlds present themselves to the scholar of Hebrew illuminated manuscripts from Spain, the earliest of which dates to the thirteenth century. She explains the distinct split in Jewish manuscript arts:

One is nonfigurative, non-narrative, an almost aniconic idiom, with a clear preference for ornament in a style that reveals strong Islamic influence. The second tells the story of ancient Israel in a richly narrative, figurative mode, while in style it echoes in every respect the artistic taste of Christian Europe.\(^{56}\)

While she argues that the two trends overlap in the major Jewish regions of Castile, Aragon, and Catalonia, nearly all of the later iconographic imagery emerges from Catalonia, in the form of Passover Haggadot (sing. Haggadah), small volumes of texts meant to be read on that holiday. While figurative art is abundant in “primitives” of Christian Aragon and Castile, the Jewish art pieces that remain from those regions from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries consist primarily of the carpet pages discussed above, which often have striking similarities to Islamic carpet pages from other parts of Iberia, particularly Granada.\(^{57}\)

The manuscript is stunning evidence of *convivencia* and has hitherto been invoked as an exemplar of it. One may understand quite clearly how all three groups (Christians, Jews, and Muslims) were already engaged in an artistic dialogue, but focusing on the dialogue itself may obscure what actually made Sephardic synagogue architecture and religious life distinct from as opposed to similar to its neighbors. Thus, a consideration of pre-Salonian Sephardic religious culture may aptly begin by looking at the Catalanian Haggadot, as they depict the figures found less frequently in the arts of Castile and Aragon besides providing additional, albeit more nebulous, architectural information about Sephardic synagogues beyond the three that remain in the more familiar regions of Castile and Andalusia.

The most studied of the Iberian Haggadot is the Golden Haggadah, dating from the first half of the fourteenth century. Its 128 illustrations contain only limited depictions of synagogues. One example has a tripartite composition, demarcated by four slender columns forming three bays (fig. 15). It is only the left bay that reveals a familiar Sephardic motif, a once-cusped arch recalling the mihrab motifs of both Islamic prayer rugs and dome motifs of Islamic as well as Jewish prayer rugs. The other two bays have more typical shallow arches. A total of seven hanging lamps, similar to those of Iberian mosques, adorn the upper portion, including three in the left bay and three in the right, which appear to be suspended from the wall from bars that cross the arches. The lamp in the center bay, which appears to hang from the ceiling, hovers directly above the rabbinical *bimah* (podium), which is articulated in a crude perspective so as to render its depth. The congregation, wearing unadorned red, white, and blue robes, contains...
Iberian and Ottoman mosques hang on either side of the ark, which contains three torahs, lifted aloft by a gridded structure. The ark has hinged doors rather than the more common Torah ark curtain.

In comparing the haggadot from Barcelona and Sarajevo one may begin to consider the architectural differences between the synagogues of the Iberian and Balkan peninsulas, respectively, prior to the arrival of Iberian congregations in Salonica. While the congregational attire in both images is quite similar, the Iberian synagogue itself seems to be of a more transparent quality, airy with slender columns and definitive Iberian architectural forms in the articulation of the arches; the Torah arks were situated differently in each image, and, as noted above, in the Sarajevo Haggadah hinged doors fulfill the role of the Torah ark curtain. The lamps, however, appear to be nearly identical.

According to Ottoman records, there were twenty-six synagogues established in Salonica between 1492 and 1680 (fig. 17). As already noted, the congregations remained divided and established themselves not only by country but by city of origin. In total, twelve synagogues were of Italian origin, seven were Spanish, four Portugese, and one Moorish; there were also two multi-congregational synagogues, one, the Talmud Torah Synagogue, being particularly large and reserved for community-wide functions. The first five congregations established were all erected in 1492–93 and hailed from Spain. These included (in their English transliterations): the Gerush Sepharad Synagogue (Castile), the Castilia Synagogue (Castile), the Mayor Rishon Synagogue (Majorca), the Catalan Yashan Synagogue (Catalonia), and the Aragon Synagogue (Aragon). They were followed by two additional synagogues established between 1535 and 1537: the Catalan Hadas Synagogue (Catalonia) and the Mayor Seni Synagogue (Majorca).

Synagogues of Portugese origin included the Évora Synagogue in 1512 or 1535 (Évora), the Lisbon Yashan Synagogue in 1519 (Lisbon), the Portugal Synagogue in 1525 (various cities of Portugese origin), the Lisbon Hadas Synagogue in 1537 (Lisbon), and the Yahia Synagogue in 1560 (Lisbon).

As a general rule, the Spanish synagogues identified with the region of origin, the Portugese synagogues with the city of origin. Although the reasons for this are not clear, it may likely be a corollary to the relatively more...
urbanized nature of Portugal in 1492 in comparison with Spain. It may very well also indicate the ways in which the Spaniards and Portuguese Sephardim electively chose to identify themselves as urban or rural, Portuguese or Spanish. Needless to say, linguistic dialects would have also been another important reason for subdividing congregations by their place of origin.

From tables published on congregation information one can glean the respective numbers of married and unmarried members in each particular congregation, a fact crucial to Ottoman census takers. Their locations within the Jewish quarter, culled from Ottoman records and censuses, are shown in a map denoting the Muslim, Christian, and Jewish quarters of Salonica in the mid-sixteenth century (fig. 18). Sadly, there is no reliable evidence as to the location of a bazaar or public space. If this information were known, it would indicate the spatial relation of the synagogue to the commercial sphere and also whether or not the Jews had regular public interaction with their Christian and Muslim counterparts in the city. Here it is best to operate under the assumption that the Salonican model of urban interaction between Jews, Muslims, and Christians followed roughly contemporaneously with that of the imperial capital, Istanbul, where the groups and their houses of congregations remained delimited to neighborhoods like Galata and Balat, while there was also a certain amount of free flow of individuals for market purposes,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congregation</th>
<th>Place of Origin</th>
<th>Year Established</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gerush Sepharad</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Castilia</td>
<td>Spain (Castile)</td>
<td>1492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mayor Rishon</td>
<td>Spain (Mallorca)</td>
<td>1492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Catalan Yashan</td>
<td>Spain (Catalonia)</td>
<td>1492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Aragon</td>
<td>Spain (Aragon)</td>
<td>1492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Neve Shalom</td>
<td>Italy (Calabria)</td>
<td>1497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Pulia</td>
<td>Italy (Apulia)</td>
<td>1502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Evora</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>1512 or 1535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ishmael</td>
<td>Italy (Calabria)</td>
<td>1517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Lisbon Yashan</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>1519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Talmud Torah</td>
<td>(central synagogue)</td>
<td>1520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Portugal</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>1525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Estrug</td>
<td>Italy (Apulia)</td>
<td>1535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Catalan Hadas</td>
<td>Spain (Catalonia)</td>
<td>16th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Mayor Seni</td>
<td>Spain (Mallorca)</td>
<td>16th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Lisbon Hadas</td>
<td>Portugal (Lisbon)</td>
<td>1537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Otranto</td>
<td>Italy (Apulia)</td>
<td>1537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Kiana</td>
<td>Italy (Calabria)</td>
<td>1545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Neve Sedek</td>
<td>Italy (Calabria)</td>
<td>1550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Yahia</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>1560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Sicilia Hadas</td>
<td>Italy (Sicily)</td>
<td>1562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Beth Aaron</td>
<td>Italy (Sicily)</td>
<td>1575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Italia Hadas</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Italia Shialom</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Shialom</td>
<td>(mixed)</td>
<td>1606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Ar Gavoa</td>
<td>Italy (Apulia)</td>
<td>1663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Mograbish</td>
<td>North Africa</td>
<td>17th century, before 1680</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 17. Table of Jewish synagogue congregations established in Salonica, 1492–1680, demonstrating the congregation names, origin and year of establishment. The table is extrapolated from Iōnannēs Chasiōtēs, ed., Tois agathois vasileuousa: Thessalonikē, historia kai politismos (Thessaloniki, 1997), 278. The table is reprinted from Vasilēs Dēmētriadēs, Topographia tēs Thessalonikēs kata tēn epochē tēs Tourkokratias, 1430–1912 (Thessaloniki, 2008 [repr., orig. pub. 1983]). 347.
Fig. 18. Map of Salonica, ca. mid-sixteenth century, illustrating the locations of synagogues, mosques, churches, and other important landmarks, including the Via Egnatia, which runs roughly east-west through the Jewish quarter, parallel to the port. Adapted from Gilles Veinstein, Salonique, 1850–1918: La “ville des Juifs” et le réveil des Balkans (Paris, 1992). (Map: C. Scott Walker, Harvard Map Collection, Harvard College Library)
particularly where specialized service economies required it.

As Heath Lowry and Mark Mazower have indicated, in Salonica the synagogues were most often not located on the street front, which was fairly common for reconstituted as well as newly-constructed synagogues (a rather rare occurrence) in other Ottoman Jewish quarters.\textsuperscript{61} Often, as is amply documented in synagogues refashioned from prior uses in Istanbul, they were meager rooms no larger than about 2,000 square feet.\textsuperscript{62} One must remember that all new synagogues and churches were built in conformance with the restrictions Ottoman law placed on the construction of non-Muslim places of worship: there were limits on the materials that could be used, the architectural heights that could be reached, the visibility of iconography from the street and, in the case of rich congregations, the level of architectural decoration considered acceptable in accordance with Islamic and caliphal values. Two things are yet further important to note: the enforcement of these strictures varied depending on historical circumstances and petitioners had been known to argue that a project was a reconstruction as opposed to a new construction, even if that is in essence what they were doing.\textsuperscript{63} This inevitably made for what would have been a more muted material palette than was found in Sephardic synagogues in Iberia. In short, the appearance of the synagogue was, at least from the outside, to be as discreet as possible. While halakhic guidelines closely regulated the formal appearances and arrangements of synagogues in Spain, there is no evidence that the Sephardic population reconstituted any halakhic principles for the interior redesign of synagogues after the expulsion, which would signal the far less regulated nature of the practice of design of new synagogues (both veritably new constructions and “retrofitted” older buildings) across Europe, within Ottoman boundaries, and in Salonica in particular.\textsuperscript{64} As such, the building and furnishing of synagogues by the eleven earliest congregations of Sephardic Salonica were probably done stealthily, and were highly contingent on subtle, local artistic trends and the available financial means of the respective members, all executed in what one author has duly described as the “spirit of the times.”\textsuperscript{65}

All evidence indicates that the Gerush Sepharad Synagogue was the most prominent Jewish structure in Salonica, at least at first. It was located closest to the Via Egnatia, the city’s (and region’s) most important thoroughfare, perhaps with direct access to it, from its appearance on the map. Cited in all accounts as the first of the five synagogues built in 1492, it is the only one whose rabbi’s name, Levi ben Habib, was also recorded.\textsuperscript{66} Along with the Castilian synagogue, it is attributed to the region of Castile. Both synagogues likely received the majority of their congregants from the Sephardic community of Toledo, which was the largest and richest of all Sephardic populations in Iberia.\textsuperscript{67}

Architecturally, this wealth is nowhere more elegantly demonstrated than in the previously mentioned Synagogue of El Tránsito in Toledo, which was commissioned as a private house of worship by the King of

![Fig. 19. El Tránsito Synagogue, Toledo, exterior view. (Photo: courtesy of Dr. James Bartholomay Kiracofe)](image)
be inferred from the significant Moorish characteristics of the interior. The multi-foil arch is by far the most salient characteristic of what one might call Sephardic architecture, at least that which remains in Spain, while only one example of such an arch is evident today in downtown Thessaloniki, at the art nouveau Casa Bianca, built in 1912 by the architect P. Arrigoni for a wealthy family by the name of Fernandez.69 Stand alone single-foil arches can also be seen in the Santa María La Blanca Synagogue, also in Toledo, built in 1203.

Gerush Sepharad’s first known rabbi, Levi ben Habib, was born in Toledo in 1483.70 At the age of nine he escaped to Portugal and eventually Salonica with his
father.71 For a number of years he served as the spiritual leader of what was until about 1540 the largest congregation in the city. Some time after that he emigrated to Safed and then eventually to Jerusalem.72 It is probable that Levi ben Habib and his father before him were instrumental in shaping the Gerush Sephard Synagogue in its early years, soliciting the congregation for money to build up and furnish the new building. Ben Habib would have found it prudent to keep the styling of the synagogue in conformity with the spatial traditions of the Toledo synagogue, at least to the best of his ability, given the material and financial resources available to him and his congregation, as well as the strictures placed on him by Ottoman regulations on non-Muslim constructions.

By the time of the 1589 census, the Aragon Synagogue seemed to have usurped ben Habib’s congregation in importance.73 The Aragon Synagogue, also established in 1492, had 404 members in its congregation by this time, compared to the 171 members of Gerush Sephard.74 The Aragon Synagogue was, in fact, the largest congregation in all of Salonica, both in 1589 and in the next census of 1613, surpassing several of the sizable congregations of Italian Jews as well.

While it is not clear why this happened, it is most logically the result of a significant influx of Aragonese Sephardim in the mid-sixteenth century, which would have coincided with the ascendant influence of Don Joseph Nasi, also known as Jaoū Miguez (d. 1579), of the Aragonese House of Mendes. Nasi served as a diplomat and administrator during the reigns of both Süleyman I (r. 1520–66) and Selim II (r. 1566–74), and was a preeminent champion of myriad policies that supported the equanimity of Ottoman Jews.75 Nasi, along with an extended and influential family spread across Europe, garnered the admiration of the Seraglio by virtue of his myriad trade connections across the continent. Nasi’s immense wealth was spread both to his relatives across Europe and to his Aragonese brethren, which had major implications for the congregation in Salonica, both in terms of their numerical growth and their material affluence.76 The Aragon Synagogue was situated close to the port, flanked by a then unnamed thoroughfare and Tsimiski Street, just down the block from the Jewish bathhouse and immediately next to the other Castilian congregation, the Castile Synagogue.77 A particular issue regarding gender affected the Aragon Synagogue.

In comparison with the Gerush Sephard, which was built on a relatively generous plot of land, the Aragon Synagogue was on a site so narrow that the requisite ‘erzat nashim (women’s enclosure) and bet knesset nashim (women’s synagogue) were probably not built. The Aragon congregation served more than twice the number of members as the Gerush Sephard, in one third the space, and the proximity of men and women would have been virtually impossible to control, particularly if the synagogue had been retrofitted from an extant structure.

When addressed in the vast secondary literature on the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, the issue of women’s autonomy is related to the desideratum to establish “the chronology and geography of the deterioration in the status of women in Jewish diaspora society,” as Paul Wexler puts it.78 In short, it is believed that the dissolution of halakhic principles actually created the conditions that led to the worsening of the status of women in Jewish diasporic society, a fact perhaps enhanced by the caliphal support of the belief that women were inferior to men. Nowhere was this made more manifest, even if only symbolically, than in the synagogue. Wexler elaborates:

There is evidence that in Christian Spain, major changes may have taken place in the status of women not long before the expulsion in 1492. Two of three surviving synagogue buildings in Spain, “El Tránsito” in Toledo and the one in Córdoba that were both constructed in the fourteenth century (i.e., when both cities were long in Christian hands), have a separate upper section for women worshipers which suggest that the latter played a purely passive role in the synagogue service. However, I. Epstein has noted that Iberian women could own and dispose of men’s seats in the synagogue that they bought and sold. Conversely, two illuminated manuscripts from fourteenth-century Aragon display men and women side by side in the synagogue, which implies the absence of segregated worship.79 Wexler goes on to compare this phenomenon with the architectural arrangements of men and women in Ashkenazi Europe, where the separation of men and women appears in thirteenth-century synagogues built in Cologne, Speyer, and Worms. While being able to buy and sell a husband’s seat in the synagogue does not necessarily mean a wife could sit in it herself, the
The creation of a ghetto in Florence was undertaken by the grand-ducal government as a public works project and as an investment. It was built, owned and administered by the state. The construction of the ghetto employed workers to turn a run-down, disreputable area in the heart of the city into a solid commercial neighborhood that also served as an architectural and religious symbol of the power and piety of the grand duke. The project was, in addition, to become a profitable rental property with a guaranteed and self-perpetuating tenant population.

Salonica had some similarities to Florence in the way it housed its new Jewish population, which, like the Tuscan Jews, inhabited the oldest part of the city, including the site of the old Roman forum. But, as both Lowry and Mazower have illustrated, Salonican Jews were more likely to have simply reappropriated the domiciles and ruins abandoned by Christian communities than they were to build new ghettos wholesale.

The new Jewish quarter of Salonica, indeed appears to have been far more ad hoc than its counterpart in Florence:

South of Egnatia, with the exception of the market districts to the west, the twisting lanes of the lower town belonged to the newcomers. Here wealthy notables lived together with the large mass of Jewish artisans, workmen, hamals, fishermen, pedlars and the destitute, cooped up in small apartments handed down from generation to generation. The overall impression of the Jewish quarters was scarcely one of magnificence. Clusters of modest homes hidden behind their walls and large barred gates were grouped around shared cortijos [small courtyards] into which housewives threw their refuse. As the city filled up, extra storeys were added to the old wooden houses and overhanging upper floors jutted out into the street. Every so often the claustrophobic and airless alleys opened unpredictably into a small placa or placeta [plazas of medium and small scale]. Rutted backstreets hid the synagogues and communal buildings...These were the least hygienic or desirable residential areas, where all the refuse of the city made its way down the slopes to collect in stagnant pools by the dank stones of the sea walls. The old harbour built by Constantine had silted up and turned into a large sewage dump, the Mouturo, whose noxious presence pervaded the lower town.
The reason for the visit by the consul-cum-antiquarian was no small secret. This particular merchant resided in the very heart of the old city, literally on top of what had once been the Roman forum. His house abutted a Roman ruin speculated to have belonged to a collection of thermae (baths) dating from the third century A.D. The rise of antiquarianism, particularly in Britain, meant more and more foreign visitors to the Jewish quarter.

British antiquarians James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, who passed through on a trip to Thessaloniki in 1754, depicts the British consul to the Ottoman Empire arriving at the home of a Sephardic merchant (fig. 22). The merchant, apparently a wealthy notable, as indicated by his outfit, the presence of a young servant, and the generous size of his private cortijo, offers coffee to his guest. In the background, Stuart and Revett can be seen dressed in Ottoman attire donned specifically for their travels; they are accompanied by the consul’s young son, the only one dressed in European clothing, and the consul’s Greek interpreter. Three women, apparently the merchant’s wife and two daughters, watch from the balcony above, excited by the far-flung company in their home.

The ruin itself consists of a nineteen-foot high unfluted Corinthian colonnade supporting a three-band epistyle, frieze, and cornice. It also supports an attic arcade with four seven-foot-high sculpted columns that have been alternately described as double-faced caryatids or embossed double-pilasters. These in turn...
support an epistyle and a second cornice. The Greeks identified the figures on the pilasters as Dionysus, Maenad, Ariadne, Leda, Nike, Avra, Dioskoros, and Ganymede.84

Folk tradition in Salonica considered the figures to be “petrified” within the pilasters where they stood adjacent to the Via Regia (King’s Street).85 For many Salonicans of the time, this particular ruin was held to be the city’s identifying architectural symbol. The name Las Incantadas (the enchanted ones) referred to the fact that the figures depicted were pagan gods, built by pagan sculptors, and thus patently mystical, abhorrent, and blasphemous. They would continue to be known by the Sephardic title until French antiquarians managed to seize the pilasters from the Ottomans in 1865 and renamed them the Piliers décorés de Las Incantadas (fig. 23).86

The arcade had become part of the urban-scale palimpsest that characterized so much of the transformation of the city center’s Roman and Byzantine heritage during the height of the development of Salonica under Ottoman rule. One portique (portal) of the colonnade serves as an exterior vestibule wherein a tall wooden gate provides a transition space from the Via Regia to the cortijo. The other three portiques form either the frontal end of the house’s elevation or, in fact, cut through its interior, delineating the space within. A taller building appears across the street.

Under a direct order from Louis XVII, the French consul general traveled to Salonica and had an additional image of Las Incantadas produced by Esprit Marie Cousinéry (and sometimes attributed to Serrieu and Fauvel) (fig. 24).87 The illustration is taken from precisely the same vantage point as that of the British illustration seventy-seven years prior, but there are some very striking differences. The ground plane appears to have swollen upwards, engulfing the lower level so that it is no longer inhabitable. The house’s stucco façade appears to have been entirely stripped, revealing the uneven stonework below. The roof sags at the corner and rubble litters the cortijo. The entry portal is but a skeleton of its former self and the building across the street seems to have given way to two new, larger buildings a bit further away. Moreover, some of the original details of the illustration are redrawn, such as the mullions of the window and the composition of the banister of the veranda.


What does remain exactly the same is Las Incantadas, in yet greater and more picturesque splendor. A forlorn woman carrying a jug on her head and with a small child at her side appears in front of the house. The nature of her headgear most likely identifies her as Sephardic. Is this her house or is she merely passing by? Is this woman who fetches her own water squatting in the former home of a merchant who once had servants to do such tasks? This was the last image of record of Las Incantadas to be produced before the French dismantled the ruin and installed the pillars in the Louvre, where they remain on view today.

Yet another palimpsest concerning the built environment comes to us from the realm of folklore. Samuel Armistead and Joseph Silverman have commented on the appearance of a ballad in Ladino in fifteenth-century Salonican sources known as “The Bridge of Arta.” The song, which was a mainstay of what Armistead and Silverman describe as the “complex, multi-lingual, and yet strikingly homogenous folklore of the Balkan Peninsula,” concerns the ritualistic practice of immuring a human being into the base of a building or a bridge as a sacrifice to ensure the structural integrity of its foundation. The ballad, one of the most well-known folk narratives of the region, outlines the story of how the work accomplished each day by a master builder and his associates collapses each night. Eventually the master builder is made aware, through some supernatural source, that the building (most commonly a bridge) will remain standing at night and into the next day if a human, typically a female, is sacrificed and immured into the structure’s foundations. Versions in Greek, Macedo-Roumanian, Albanian, Serbian, Macedonian, Hungarian, Daco-Roumanian, and Bulgarian all refer to either the Bridge of Arta in western Thrace or the Citadel of Deva.88 It has been argued that the ballad has yet deeper origins, and initially referred to various Hellenistic sites: most commonly the Taşköprü of Adana.89

The most extensive Ladino version of the ballad begins thusly:

Under the bridge of Larissa there was a graceful maiden. Her father has kept her guarded for a handsome lord. The girl, who was shameless, went to visit the vizir.

Along the way she met a boza [a drink made from fermented millet] vendor.

It is noteworthy that the Ladino version moves the bridge from Narda to Larissa, which is much closer to Salonica. I venture that the ballad refers to the Pineios Bridge, which spans the Pineios River and was at the time the oldest bridge in the area of Larissa (fig. 25).90 As in her previous incarnations, the victim is found “under” the bridge, but important distinctions have been transposed by the new settlers from the original Greek version. Armistead and Silverman note that:

The Sephardic anecdote is so terse that only the barest outlines of a narrative emerge. Distinctive features which might facilitate comparison and identification with a specific ballad subtype are almost totally lacking. However, the Sephardic vignette can be shown to differ significantly from the Greek ballad in two important details. In contrast to the matter-of-fact intervention of the river spirit (stoicheion) in many variants of The Bridge of Arta, there is a notable and possibly intentional, avoidance of the supernatural in the Jewish text. Here the bridge is not carried away as a result of a jealous malevolence of an elemental spirit, but merely because of the December floods and, belaboring the obvious, because the “bridge was not erected upon a solid foundation.” In the Sephardic text, the Greek master builder’s wife has become the engineer’s daughter...91

As with the figures they referred to as Las Incantadas, the Sephardim of Salonica deliberately discredited any
sense of the supernatural from their found surroundings. Rather, they rewrote the myth, ascribing to it the most profane meaning possible—the laws of physics: any failure of the bridge outside the city limits must be the fault of the engineer, whose daughter is forced to pay the ultimate price for her father’s shortcomings. Can we see the Ladino alterations of the ballad as meaningful in either a spiritual or architectural sense, or both? Perhaps, but such ideas would be creative guesswork. If there were more allegories of this kind, one could potentially piece together a more holistic ethos for the ways in which the Sephardim approached the structures they found in Salonica, such as, in this case, Las Incantadas and the Bridge at Larissa. What is ascertainable is that the bridge and Las Incantadas present structures that, on the one hand, are practically useful yet, on the other, proffer potentially dangerous and heretical qualities left over from former pagan inhabitants, demonstrating the far greater threat of the pagan thought of the dead than that of the Islamic or Christian theology of the living.

One locale with a more easily determined provenance is the Jewish cemetery of Salonica, one of the few places where the unity of the Jewish population could not be disputed. It is not clear when the Jewish cemetery first became established on a parcel of land outside the city’s Byzantine-era fortifications, in the foothills of the old city’s northeast corner. It was located just north of the Muslim cemetery and from the foothill, looking toward the sea, one can imagine the distinct topographical difference between the above-ground, horizontal graves of the Jewish cemetery and the vertical headstones of the Muslim cemetery.

Both cemeteries would eventually limit growth of the Christian quarter in the eastern part of the city. It is, nonetheless, well known that the space occupied by the Jewish cemetery was continually coveted during the Ottoman period and that several parts of it were gradually seized as the city expanded eastward. Regardless of the permutations in the cemetery’s boundaries, maps suggest that any Jew or Muslim traveling to their respective cemetery would have had to traverse the Christian quarter. In many ways, both cemeteries spatially symbolize the political impulse of the sultan—to keep the Christian population of Salonica contained; indeed, he had censuses taken with unusual frequency in order to make sure that the Greek Orthodox never became a majority of the city’s population. As such, the cemeteries must have been crucial elements in the repeated gerrymandering of the definitive limits of the city proper. It is interesting to note that Bayezid II was not concerned about the city having a Jewish majority, as would happen by the sixteenth century.

Virtually all discussion of the Jewish cemetery of Salonica has been limited to its tragic fate in World War II. The Jewish cemetery survived the devastating fire of 1917 because of its distance from the old town, which included the Jewish quarter, the epicenter of the destruction. A plethora of photographs of the cemetery were taken in the interwar years, probably because it demarcated all that was left of the heritage of a major portion of the city’s culture. Yet when the Nazis entered Thessaloniki in March 1941, one of the first things they did was plunder the Jewish cemetery, smashing the low, horizontal tombstones into pieces and leaving only their foundations behind. Fragments of tombstones, some dating as far back as the early fifteenth century, were soon thereafter used to line a swimming pool built for the German forces occupying the city. This gut-wrenching modern-day spolia is the most deeply embedded recollection of Jewish memory in Salonica.

CONCLUSION

A well-known passage from the Seder Eliyahu Zuta makes note of how members of Bayezid II’s imperial circle were bemused by the King of Spain’s readiness to dispose of such a large and talented group of its citizens, endowing its “enemies,” particularly the Ottomans, with such useful migrants. This makes plain how the utility of the Sephardim, at least in the first few centuries of their residence in Ottoman lands, trumped any concern over their religious and cultural qualities, and indicates the vagaries of millet and dhimmi policies that may have either been the foundational reason for their open invitation to cities like Salonica or, alternately, simply a legal and conceptual overlay made post facto. The answer, as this article hopes to have articulated, lies somewhere in between.
The varied array of sources and subjects considered in this analysis does not lend itself to polemical commentary on either Salonica and its environs or the city’s residents. Broad in its material scope, it facilitates what may at best be described as educated conjecture about the nature of a high point of Jewish culture in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Eastern Mediterranean of the early modern era played a significant, polyvalent, and multi-pronged role in architectural, artistic, urban, and perhaps even chromatic transformation. Moreover, the evidence regarding the role of the Sephardic community in Salonica deepens our understanding of the Mediterranean as a space of an incredible degree of assimilation and adaptation, of both conscious and subconscious, formal and informal means.

Seen together, Sephardic fabrics and color schemes, as well as synagogues and other built domains, illustrate a Jewish presence in Salonican and Ottoman material culture that is at once fleeting and palpable, heterogeneous and universal. The material culture of this itinerant, Mediterranean population is not reducible to simple delineations of the place of the Sephardic community of Salonica vis-à-vis Ottoman society and the Ottoman state, as it is highly unlikely that the Sephardim, as I hope I have argued, were indistinguishable among themselves. From distinctions between male and female societal positioning, Castilian and Aragonese factions, and the economies of the well-off and not-so-well-off, there were more differences than similarities among the Sephardim of Salonica. It was not a monolithic minority. Instead, its material, urbanistic, and economic involvement with Ottoman Salonica reveals variations and similarities that speak to the Sephardic community’s Ibero-Jewish antecedents, their aspirations in a new context, and their experience of the Ottoman administration of its non-Muslim subjects as a visual and material as well as political and economic system, replete with its own strictures, points of penetrability, and ability to change over time. What is shared is the Mediterranean, a space not of immutable fixture but of movement and perpetual exchange.

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NOTES

Author’s note: This paper began as a research project for a Fall 2009 seminar on the early modern Mediterranean co-taught by Professors Gülru Necipoğlu and Alina Payne at Harvard University. I am grateful to them for their direction and encouragement of the idea from its inception. Earlier portions were also presented at two conferences, “Spirituality of Place” at the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) on February 18, 2011, and “Beyond the Author,” organized by Yavuz Sezer, Igor Demchenko, and Jennifer Chuong at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on March 5, 2011. I received useful commentary at the latter conference from Laura Adams, Lecturer in Sociology at Harvard University. Professor Carol Herselle Krinsky at New York University read a draft of this essay early on and provided invaluable insights and lines of inquiry on certain aspects of Jewish art and architecture. At Harvard I received useful source advice from András Riedlmayer at the Fine Arts Library. Additional time and resources to research and write this paper were provided in part by a grant from the Fulbright Foundation and a predoctoral post at the Lehrstuhl für Architekturgeschichte und kuratorische Praxis at the Technische Universität München. The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University generously provided funding to cover the cost of the image rights.

2. I owe a debt to the work of Mark Mazower for the investigation of such plurality. His book Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430–1950 (New York, 2005), has proven particularly important for understanding the history of the city, and the citations have been valuable as a portal towards myriad further readings.
3. Nicephoros Moschopoulos, “Hē Hellás kata ton Ebliá Tselempé” [“Greece according to Evliya Çelebi”], Annual of the Society for Byzantine Studies 16 (1940): 321–24. I would like to thank my friend Olga Touloumi, Ph.D. candidate in Architecture at Harvard University, for verifying the original Greek version of this passage.
4. Gilles Veinstein, Salonique, 1830–1918: La “ville des Juifs” et le réveil des Balkans (Paris, 1992), 42–45. The term “Jerusalem of the West” is one that appears primarily in twentieth-century literature on Jewish history. It is not clear whether it derived from actual usage at the time, but the term has also been used to describe Amsterdam in the early modern period. The significance of this designation depends on whether Thessaloniki is being considered in its Ottoman context or in its modern Greek context, eliciting the “East vs. West” and “Oriental vs. Occidental” problematic.
5. Ibid.

I am indebted to Professor Gülru Necipoğlu for pointing out these similarities to me and for encouraging me to consult Walter Denny with Sumru Belger Krody, *The Classical Tradition in Anatolian Carpets* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 2002), which offers numerous examples of mihrab and twin-column prayer rugs of both Jewish and Muslim patronage.


18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.


22. Ibid.


Ronald T. Marchese, *The Fabric of Life: Cultural Transformations in Turkish Society* (Binghamton, N.Y., 2005), 130. Marchese indicates that what became known as “Turkish red” actually derived from earlier references to “Edirne red,” a pigment associated with a particular variant of madder-dyed fabric that passed through trade routes connecting Edirne and Bursa around 1550.

25. Ibid.


31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., 30.

33. Ibid.


35. Ibid.


37. Ibid.
medicinal concoctions from rhubarb and some of his garments take on the light reddish hue of that plant. Bonnart based this etching on that of Eugene Roger, who recorded the same physician in his travelogue *La Terre Sainte* (Paris, 1646).


50. See n. 44 above.


53. Ibid., 175–78.

As a relative newcomer to the architectural study of synagogues, I owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Krinsky, who oriented me toward some of the important issues to consider. I also wish to thank Professor Alina Payne for putting me in touch with Krinsky.


57. The Yahia Synagogue is not attributed to a city of origin in any of the accounts consulted, but I am venturing that “Yahia” is referring to Yahia Ben Yahi III, also known as Yahia Negro Ibn Ya’isch, a Sephard born in Córdoba in 115 into a line of rabbis said to be direct descendants of the Exilarchs of Babylon. Yahia Ben Yahi III was elected by King Alfonso I of Portugal (r. 1139–85) to be the chief rabbi of Portugal and spent the balance of his life in Lisbon, where he died in 1185. Interestingly, his descendants converted to Christianity at the time of the Inquisition, among them King Alfonso’s mistress, Madragana Ben Aloandro, who happened to be a great-great-grandmother of Queen Victoria, by virtue of ties between the Portuguese and British royal families. See António Caetano de Sousa, *História genealógica da Casa real portuguesa*, 13 vols. (Colomba, 1946–54).

58. These can be found in Yaron Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans: Ottoman Jewish Society in the Seventeenth Century* (Tübingen, 2008), 88–89.

59. Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans*, 227–31. There is hardly any information on early-modern-era Ottoman synagogues, and there is only a bit more on the nineteenth
century: see Juhasz, Sephardi Jews in the Ottoman Empire, 37–51; Gila Hadar, “The Jewish Community of Tyre in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries” (MA thesis, Tel Aviv University, 1996), 114–17 (in Hebrew); Marie-Christine Varol, Balat, faubourg juif d’Istanbul (Istanbul, 1989), 9–21. The Akhrida Synagogue in Istanbul now serves as an excellent reminder of the grander styles known in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Also of note is the renovation of a synagogue in Ankara, which is documented in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Also of note is the Mahallesi ve Sinagog, “by İlter Fügen in “Ankara’nın Eski Kent Dokusunda Yahudi Mektepleri,” Belleten 60 (1996): 719–31 (contains over thirty photographs). All of these authors cite Heath Lowry’s work on Salonica. See Abraham Galanté, Histoire des juifs de Turquie (Istanbul, 1984), 45–48, 217–21, 259–69. While these documents date from the nineteenth century, the dimensions of the buildings would likely not have changed over the years due to legal restrictions. This is also echoed in descriptions given by Veinstein, Salonique, 42–63.

62. See Abraham Galanté, Histoire des juifs de Turquie (Istanbul, 1984), 45–48, 217–21, 259–69. While these documents date from the nineteenth century, the dimensions of the buildings would likely not have changed over the years due to legal restrictions. This is also echoed in descriptions given by Veinstein, Salonique, 42–63.

63. I thank Dr. Karen A. Leal, Managing Editor of Muqarnas, for suggesting these ideas to me.

64. Ben-Naeh, Jews in the Realm of the Sultans, 227.

65. Ibid.


67. See, for example, Nancy F. Marino, Don Juan Pacheco: Wealth and Power in Late Medieval Spain (Tempe, Ariz., 2006), 21.


69. Veinstein, Salonique, 172.

70. Shmuelevitz, Jews of the Ottoman Empire, 191.

71. The possibility seems quite strong that Levi ben Habib’s father was the very first rabbi of the Gerush Sepharad congregation, as the rabbinical positions were often kept within the same family.

72. Levi ben Habib published his responsa, the Ladino equivalent of memoirs, under the title Sh’elot u Tshuvot ha-Ralbah in Jerusalem; these records have been translated by modern-day Ladino scholars and are referred to in Shmuelevitz, Jews of the Ottoman Empire, 191.

73. Ben-Naeh, Jews in the Realm of the Sultans, 88–89.

74. Ibid.


76. Mazower, Salonica, 53.

77. This information is gleaned from a map insert in the back of Vasilēs Dēmētriadēs, Topographia tēs Thessalonikēs kata tēn epochē tēs Tourkokratias, 1430–1922 (Thessaloniki, 2008 [repr., orig. pub. 1983]).


79. Ibid.


81. Ibid., 201.

82. Mazower, Salonica, 55.

83. Ibid.


85. Mazower, Salonica, 55.

86. Cousinéry, Voyage dans la Macédoine, 1: iii.


88. Samuel G. Armistead and Joseph H. Silverman, “A Judeo-Spanish Derivative of the Ballad of The Bridge of Arta,” The Journal of American Folklore 76, 299 (Jan.–Mar. 1963): 16–17. An anonymous reviewer of this article has differed with Armistead and Silverman, contending that the Bridge of Arta actually refers to a bridge in Epirus, located further north, within modern Greek borders, close to the Albanian border. The reviewer contends that the toponym Narda is certainly that of Arta.

89. Ibid., 17–19.


93. Mazower, Salonica, 49.


95. Ibid.

During a short visit to the town of Rayy, in Iran, al-Harith b. Hammam al-Basri encounters crowd upon crowd of people “spreading with the spread of locusts, and running with the running of steeds,” eagerly talking among themselves about a preacher,1 who, they tell al-Harith, was even better than Ibn Samʿun.2 Even though al-Harith realizes that he will face a noisy, bustling throng, he goes to the assembly place where men of all ranks are gathered, “ruler and ruled,” “eminent and obscure,” and finds an “old man, bowed and with a breast-hunch,” wearing a turban in a conical form (qalansuwa) and a cloak (ṭaylasān), both external signs of the man’s position as a preacher (fig. 1).3 The man delivers a series of admonitions, exhorting the assembled company to abstain from greed and forbidden things, mend their ways, and live out their lives according to religious precepts. This continues until sunset approaches, when a petitioner comes forward and claims that he has been wronged by an official and that the governor—who is present at the assembly—has refused to hear his complaint. At the wronged man’s urging, the preacher admonishes the governor and then launches into criticism of his behavior in a discourse directed at the prince, who is also at the gathering. The basic premise of the preacher’s speech is that “the happiest of rulers is he whose people are happy in him.”4 The preacher publicly shames the governor and persuades him to repent and redress the wrongs inflicted on the petitioner. To make further amends, the governor not only thanks the preacher but also gives him presents and extends an invitation to his home.

After the preacher finishes his discourse, he revels in his success among the company and then exits the place. Al-Harith, the narrator of the story, follows the preacher and “show[s] him a sharp glance.” When the preacher notices al-Harith, he recites in verse:

I am he whom thou knowest, Harith,  
The talker with kings, the wit, the intimate.  
I charm as charm not the triple-twisted strings,  
At times a brother of earnest, at times a jester.  
Events have not changed me since I met thee,  
Nor has vexing calamity peeled my branch;  
Nor has any splitting edge cloven my tooth;  
But my claw is fixed in every prey:  
On each herd that roams my wolf is ravaging;  
So that it is as though I were the heir of all mankind,  
Their Shem, their Ham, and their Japhet.5

It is through this poetry and the earlier discourse, an alternation between prose and poetry, that al-Harith recognizes the preacher’s true identity—Abu Zayd al-Saruji—and credits him with a genuine act of piety exceeding that of ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd.6 Abu Zayd then leaves, “trailing his sleeves.” The story ends when, to al-Harith’s regret, Abu Zayd disappears from Rayy.

This maqāma (assembly, session, or séance), named for the town of Rayy, is the twenty-first of fifty.7 It highlights key features of the other forty-nine assemblies. As in the majority of maqāmas (forty-nine out of fifty), al-Harith is the narrator and serves as a witness to Abu Zayd’s profound linguistic eloquence, broad knowledge of the history of literature and culture, and erudition in all areas of human inquiry, as well as their highly specialized vocabularies. Abu Zayd is the hero—though one might also propose “anti-hero,” depending on the reader’s moral makeup and personal proclivities. In
doing what he does; that through language he ensnares everyone he meets; he is unto a crowd of people what a wolf is to a sheepfold; and to emphasize his wide-reaching influence over humanity, Abu Zayd likens himself to Shem, Ham, and Japhet, the sons of Noah and heirs of mankind, all combined into one person. Although Abu Zayd uses his linguistic brilliance and guile to dupe people, no one is ever really hurt as a result but is instead deprived of money, valuables, other personal possessions, or the kindness expected in light of the hospitality they extended to a stranger. Those tricked by Abu Zayd survive with bruised egos, their human frailties exposed.

In maqâma 25, of Karaj (between Isfahan and Hamadan), al-Harith begins his narration by noting that
he had come to town to settle some business but that the winter weather was so severe there that he stayed indoors as much as possible. Work required that he leave his lodging one day and he came upon a crowd of people who had gathered around an old man nearly naked, save for a turban wrapped from a handkerchief and “breeched with a napkin” (i.e., a loincloth). (Later overpainting, perhaps a repair, has almost entirely concealed the naked man, who stands in the archway.) The inadequately dressed man addresses the crowd in verse (fig. 2):

O people, nothing can announce to you my poverty
More truly than this, my nakedness in the season of cold.
So from my outward misery, judge ye
The inward of my condition, and what is hidden of my state.
And beware a change in the truce of fortune:
For know that I was once illustrious in rank,
I had command of plenty, and of a blade that severed;

My yellow coins served my friends, my lances destroyed my foes.10

But his fortunes changed and he lost his social status. The man ends his poem with the final lines, “Who will cloak me either with embroidered garment or ragged coat/Seeking the face of God, and not my thanks?” and reverts to a discourse composed of rhymed prose (sajʿ). It is here that the nearly naked man makes an allusion to the “winter with its kāfs,” and states that in prior years he had always been able to prepare for “the cold weather.” Now, he remarks, “my arm is my pillow, my skin is my garment, the hollow of my hand is my dish.” A person in the crowd challenges the man’s pedigree, now that he has proved his erudition—evident from his speech—to which the old man retorts, “A curse on him who boasts of mouldering bones! There is no glory but in piety and choice scholarship,” a sentiment amplified by a verse on the same theme.11 The man then sat down,

Fig. 2. Abu Zayd, nearly naked, stands in a doorway and recites poetry to a crowd, maqāma 25, of Karaj. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 5847, fols. 74b–75a. (Photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France)
collapsing into a shivering mass. It is at this moment that al-Harith, struck by literary elegances resembling those of al-Asma‘i, takes a very close look at the man and recognizes him as Abu Zayd, who, he concludes, is using nakedness as a “noose for the prey.”12 Perceiving al-Harith’s dawning recognition, Abu Zayd fears being exposed. On the spot he recites: “I swear by the shade of the night and the moon, by the stars and the new moonlight, that none shall cloak me [layṣa yasturunī] save one whose disposition is goodly, whose face is imbued with the dew of benevolence.”13 Here, Abu Zayd’s choice of the word for “cloak me” (yasturunī: from the verb satara) was an intentional ambiguity. He knew al-Harith would understand the figurative meaning—“conceal me”—of his imperative, while other members of the audience would understand it simply in the literal sense of giving him clothes.14 This appeal played to al-Harith’s vanity and he took pity on Abu Zayd, giving him his fur coat. The other men at the gathering were similarly moved to feel sorry for the skimply clad man and donated their furs and colored coats—so many that the man could hardly carry them away.

Al-Harith pursues Abu Zayd (fig. 3), who, in response to al-Harith’s instructions not to go naked again, rebukes him for speaking about things of which he has no knowledge. Wanting to leave, agitated and angry, Abu Zayd adds that al-Harith should know his nature (shinšinatī) too well by now to hope for reform. Trying to cajole Abu Zayd, al-Harith offers that he could have exposed him to the crowd of onlookers but did not; if he had, Abu Zayd would not have received the donated clothing and “come off more coated than an onion.”15 And then comes the quid pro quo. When al-Harith asks Abu Zayd what he meant in his speech by the phrase “the kāfs of winter,” Abu Zayd reminds him of a poem by Ibn Sukkara (d. 995–96) in which seven things—all beginning with the Arabic letter kāf (“k”)—are spoken of as necessary to pass a winter in comfort: “A home, a purse, a stove, a cup of wine after the roast meat, and a pleasant wife, and clothing” (kinn wa kīs wa kānūn wa kāʾs til baʿd al-kabāb wa kuss nāʿim wa kisāʾ).16 Abu Zayd concludes: “Surely an answer that heals is better than a cloak that warms; so be content with what thou hast learnt and depart.”17 Al-Harith spends the winter missing his fur coat.

In maqāma 31, al-Harith travels from his home to the region of Syria (Sham) with the intention of trading. He pitches his tent at Ramla, where he encounters an encampment of pilgrims preparing to leave and continue their pilgrimage to Mecca. Al-Harith is moved to change his plans and joins them. When the caravan reaches Juhfa—the Syrian pilgrims’ station—the pilgrims alight from their camels and start to unpack their belongings; a partly clothed man emerges from the mountains and starts to address the pilgrims in rhymed prose and verse on the duties of religion (fig. 4 [a and b]). According to him, the ḥajj did not consist simply of traveling to Mecca and enduring various physical (“emaciating of bodies”) and emotional hardships (“separation from children”) on the long road, but was also about abstaining from sin, maintaining “purity of submissive-ness,” and the “fervor of virtue.” Thus, he urged the pilgrims to comprehend the full significance of what they were doing and continued to offer moral guidance through another extended oration. Once again al-Harith recognizes the man’s true identity—he “sniffed the breeze of Abu Zayd”—and, happy to encounter him again, approached Abu Zayd, attaching himself “like the lām to the alif”—a metaphor of the written Arabic letters “L” and “A” spooning each other. But Abu Zayd rejects al-Harith, announcing that he had vowed not to associate with anyone, “neither ride together nor alternately with any one, neither make gain nor boast of pedigree, neither seek profit, nor companionship, nor else accommodate myself to him who dissembles.”18 As Abu Zayd was departing, he made one more speech to the pilgrims. In al-Harith’s words, Abu Zayd then “sheathed the blade of his tongue, and went on his way.” As the caravan journeyed on to Mecca, al-Harith continued to look everywhere for Abu Zayd but could never find him. Maqāma 31 is one of only a few of the fifty assemblies in which Abu Zayd behaves honestly—using eloquence for good purposes without any trace of a swindle.
Fig. 3. Abu Zayd confronted by al-Harith, maqāma 25, of Karaj. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 5847, fol. 76a. (Photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France)
Fig. 4, a and b. Abu Zayd addresses a caravan of pilgrims, maqāma 31, of Ramla. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 5847, fols. 94b–95a. (Photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France)
AL-HARIRI’S MAQĀMĀT: APPROACHES TO ITS STUDY AND THE WORD-IMAGE DEBATE

As these introductory selections suggest, there is much humor in Abu Muhammad al-Qasim b. ‘Ali b. Muhammad b. ‘Uthman al-Hariri al-Basri’s Maqāmāt (Assemblies),¹⁹ a tour-de-force of medieval Arabic literature, and chief among its works of belles-lettres. Although it is a text about the power of language to persuade, mostly discourse delivered by Abu Zayd viva voce, it was also transmitted in written forms, and al-Hariri’s brilliance as an author could only be completely appreciated by actually seeing his text written in a manuscript. For its complete meaning and registers of literary operation to be properly understood, this was a text that required access to the physical book—seeing the writing and not merely hearing it recited. This aspect of the Maqāmāt is exemplified by such elements as palindromic sentences and poems or other texts written entirely with, or without, diacritical marks, such as in maqāma 26, “the spotted,” where alternate lines in one discourse are composed of dotted or undotted letters. Arabic is a fully phonetic language, with each one of its letters corresponding to a unique sound (the use of homonyms, a set of repeated shapes to build the written alphabet, was remedied by a system of dots of various numbers and configurations to designate individual phonemes). While the audition of a correct recitation of the Maqāmāt would reveal differences between dotted and undotted letters, it was only through seeing the written text that the ingenuity and play of al-Hariri’s constructions could be completely appreciated.

Apart from these ingenious devices—and al-Hariri’s Maqāmāt is replete with them—the special difficulty and lexical gamesmanship of the author dictated that manuscript copies were fully vowelized and letter pointed, carrying the whole panoply of conventional orthographic signs (such as intensifications [doublings of consonants] and markers for indefinite nouns). In this respect, it approaches manuscript copies of the Koran and makes it unlike the vast majority of medieval Arabic texts.²⁰ Despite the many difficulties of its arcane and archaizing language (a lexicon of outmoded and learned meanings), countless copies of the Maqāmāt were produced—some 700 were authorized during al-Hariri’s life—twenty commentaries were made, the best known by al-Sharishi (d. 1222), and an impressive number of illustrated copies, eleven in all, are extant from the period between the early thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.²¹ Of these examples, this essay is concerned with one: the manuscript copied and illustrated by Yahya b. Mahmud b. Yahya b. Abi al-Hasan b. Kuwarriha al-Wasiti, dated May 4, 1237.²² Notwithstanding its fame through frequent reproduction, this manuscript has been selected for three main reasons, each one related to its special status: the first is that al-Wasiti copied the text and painted the narrative images, strong evidence of his agency in conceptualizing an interpretation of al-Hariri’s text; the second concerns al-Wasiti’s capacity to innovate while at the same time working within the bounds of established practices of the art of the book and painting; the third—and perhaps most important—has to do with the incomplete, often misleading, presentation of the 1237 Maqāmāt manuscript through scholarly publications.

Although al-Hariri (d. 1122), poet and philologist, became synonymous with the genre, he notes in the preface to his Maqāmāt that it had been “devised” by Badiʿ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani (d. 1008).²³ Al-Hariri probably composed his Maqāmāt between 1101 and 1108. In the field of literary studies, much of the scholarship about the Maqāmāt has focused on the relationship between the texts composed by al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri, in addition to the origins and features of the genre. The concept of a gathering of anecdotes is believed to stem from such models as Abu ʿUthman ʿAmr b. Bahr b. Mahbub al-Jahiz’s Kitāb al-Bukhalāʾ (Book of Misers; before 869), a penetrating, humorous, and satirical work on the avarice of non-Arabs, with a whole chapter devoted to vagabonds; Abu Hanifa Ahmad b. Dawud al-Dinawari’s Al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl (Tales of Long-Lived Men; before 903), an entertaining history written from an Iranian perspective; and Abu ‘Ali al-Muhassin al-Tanukhi’s Nishwār al-muhāḍara (Desultory Conversations; before 994), a massive record of events, anecdotes, and actions that the author deemed important enough to commit to writing.²⁴
another Arab poet and philologist born in Basra.\textsuperscript{25} A. F. L. Beeston observes the staggering range of variables in the anecdote: it may be very short or long, and “in content it may deal with a humorous or pithy saying, a remarkable event, a piece of literary criticism, a riddle, or even (in the Arabic ambience) a grammatical observation or a well-expressed piece of religious homily.”\textsuperscript{26} But he identifies three traits common to all: the anecdote is introduced against a background of contingent detail, which enlivens it; the author presents the anecdote as true or truthfully narrated; and each anecdote stands alone as an autonomous, independent component.\textsuperscript{27}

In the 800s, developments in Arabic literature took place of importance to the later Maqāmāt, especially al-Hariri’s work. These changes involved the combination of the oratorical style of the Friday sermon (\textit{khuṭba}), “marked by strong parallelism and ‘balance’ but devoid of rhyme,” which were “married to ornamental features derived from verse, namely rhyming and tropes (the latter collectively referred to as \textit{badīʿ}), producing a new kind of \textit{saj}’, which rapidly achieved a tremendous dominance over prose writing.”\textsuperscript{28} By the mid-900s, the use of \textit{saj}’ became commonplace in religious sermons and in secular epistles (\textit{risāla}).\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Saj}’ has been described as a rhythmical prose that uses “rhythmic units which are generally quite short..., terminated by a clausula,” with the units “grouped sequentially on a common rhyme.”\textsuperscript{30} Al-Hamadhani’s contribution was to apply \textit{saj}’ to a compilation of anecdotes of the sort made by al-Tanukhi, whose dominant theme was, in Beeston’s words, “the tatterdemalion who is nevertheless a miracle of cleverness and eloquence, and the final anagorisis in which he proves to be something other than he appears.”\textsuperscript{31} Unlike al-Tanukhi, al-Hamadhani presents the majority of his anecdotes on the authority of one man.\textsuperscript{32} Building on al-Hamadhani’s model, al-Hariri consistently introduces each anecdote on the authority of the narrator, al-Harith b. Hammam al-Basri, always paired with the same hero, Abu Zayd al-Saruji. This establishes a consistent structure of narrative presentation throughout al-Hariri’s \textit{Maqāmāt}. Another development from al-Hamadhani’s model is al-Hariri’s systematic application of \textit{saj}’ to his \textit{Maqāmāt}, fashioning a text dominated by rhymed and rhythmic prose interspersed with poetry. He also demonstrates a capacity for poetic composition and invention that outstrips al-Hamadhani: of all the poems appearing in his \textit{Maqāmāt}, al-Hariri borrows only a handful from other authors.\textsuperscript{33}

While historians of Arabic literature and language have studied al-Hariri’s \textit{Maqāmāt} in a relatively continuous chain of scholarship and publication going back to the 1800s—with recent research on the text as a literary work to be discussed later—the same cannot be said for art historians. Illustrated copies of the \textit{Maqāmāt} of al-Hariri were only occasionally exhibited and published over the course of the early 1900s, and enjoyed their greatest public exposure in 1962 in Richard Ettinghausen’s book titled \textit{Arab Painting},\textsuperscript{34} which focused on two illustrated manuscripts, the 1237 \textit{Maqāmāt} made by al-Wasiti and the undated copy in St. Petersburg (Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, S23), datable to circa 1225–35. Ettinghausen styled both as embodiments of the “apogee” of painting in Arabic manuscripts, made at a watershed, on the eve of the long “decline” that he traces from the second half of his book until the eighteenth century (the two \textit{Maqāmāt} appear precisely in the middle of \textit{Arab Painting}, a true fulcrum!). The most comprehensive effort to analyze the illustrated \textit{Maqāmāt} as a group was offered by Oleg Grabar in 1984.\textsuperscript{35} Grabar focused on thirteen illustrated copies of al-Hariri’s \textit{Maqāmāt}, eleven of them made in the 1200s through 1300s, to prepare the groundwork for an examination of how the Arabic text was visualized and integrated with its images, adopting an approach forged through the study of manuscripts from Byzantium and medieval Europe.\textsuperscript{36} But ultimately Grabar’s interest migrated to other questions he had considered in earlier studies: how the illustrated \textit{Maqāmāt} participated in a widespread contemporary production of objects bearing figural imagery—described by Ettinghausen as an “efflorescence” or “flowering” of the arts—and how such objects, particularly ceramics, metalwork, and books, reflected the interests and impulses of a broad medieval clientele, “the mercantile, artisanal and scholarly bourgeoisie of the larger Arabic-speaking cities.”\textsuperscript{37} For Grabar, the \textit{Maqāmāt} both reflected and embodied the personal and collective priorities of a literate, Arabic-speaking,
very own grandson in 1162. In 1962, Ettinghausen opined that the artists of the *Maqāmāt* were “oblivious to the philological pyrotechnics of the *Maqāmāt*”; in 1974, James observed that “[t]he illustrative potential of the 50 tales is meagre;” and in 1974, and again in 1984, Grabar framed a series of provocative questions about the role of images in manuscripts of al-Hariri’s *Maqāmāt* based on the same set of assumptions: “And what do these images do to a text which was only valued for its verbal acrobatics?... Are these images commentaries to be seen and appreciated with the text or pictures which were perhaps inspired by the text but which are meant to be enjoyed separately as visual experiences?” All the while Grabar maintained that “the purpose and success of the story lie exclusively in its language, not in its narrative.”

These observations only yield a conundrum for art history: if the primary function and interest of al-Hariri’s *Maqāmāt* do not lie in the frame stories, narrative emplotments presented through fifty discrete components, but rather concern feats of language that could not be visualized in forms commensurate to the complex registers of the text, why were so many of the extant *Maqāmāt* from the 1200s illustrated? Indeed, why is the *Maqāmāt* among the most heavily illustrated Arabic texts of the early 1200s? In response to these questions, Grabar and other scholars offered answers extrinsic to the text, conceiving of the extensively pictorialized *Maqāmāt* as indices of real life, reflective of the tastes, proclivities, and concerns of an urban and literate “bourgeoisie,” even though it was not possible to link any manuscript to a specific patron. It was this presumed audience, catered to by artists, that found in al-Hariri’s text—specifically through its narrative components, its entertaining and satirical stories—an opportunity to express cultural and social symmetries between their time and that of al-Hariri’s text. But it bears emphasis that this approach to the text—which prioritizes al-Hariri’s narratives—was simply a supplement to another audience, the learned commentators on the *Maqāmāt*, who in their long history of critical reception had focused on linguistics and lexicography, as well as on al-Hariri’s command of Arabic language.

Despite frequent acknowledgements of the extraordinary artistic accomplishments evident in the 1237 *Maqāmāt*, as well as in related manuscripts, and of the complex and ambitious pictorial cycles created to accompany al-Hariri’s text, art historians have not attended to the full range of ways in which the text—along with the manuscript as a complete object—is affected by narrative paintings. The absence is easy to explain because general assessments of al-Hariri’s text—adopted by art historians from the field of literary study—curtailed the variety of possible approaches to interrelations between word and image. Already in 1959 David Storm Rice remarked that the text “requires no illustration” and that the stories were “a mere pretext for the masterly display of lexicographical knowledge,” suggesting that the illustrations were “so many distractions to the reader.” After all, Rice argues, there is no evidence of illustrated copies from al-Hariri’s lifetime, or in the immediate generations that followed, including an extant manuscript copied by the author’s
and literature, rather than on his gifted storytelling. By privileging what medieval commentators valued most about al-Hariri’s *Maqāmāt*, modern literary historians prompted art historians to move away from the text and explain the preponderance of paintings through other causes.

At one level, the conundrum is easily dismissed, or abated, if one restores the visual properties of the written text. Al-Hariri’s *Maqāmāt* is certainly a mode of verbal play, a form of game, which Abd al-Fattah Kilito has described as a “poetic calligraphy” and an “expression of the desire to explore the possibilities of language, to tantalize experience through the resources of an alphabet.”⁵⁰ As noted above, al-Hariri deploys, among other feats of mastery, palindromic prose sentences and verses, and sentences written entirely with, or without, diacritical marks, both pointed and unpointed letters (fig. 5). On a sensorial register, these effects can be more readily seen than heard. When he copied al-Hariri’s text, moreover, al-Wasiti structured it to render monologue distinct from dialogue, to separate out poetry from prose, and to emphasize for his reader/viewer, among many other literary phenomena, a sequence of riddles (fig. 6). Here the assembled company are presented with ten versified riddles—each one introduced by the prose line “then... he said/saying/recited” (thamma ... qāla/ inshā yaqūlu/anshada). The riddles themselves consist of two couplets each, but use different meters.⁵¹

Throughout the manuscript, prose text is written across the full width of the page—the ligatures connecting letters subtly stretched or contracted to make the words in a line comfortably fit the assigned width without bunching or over extension—to produce the impression of blocks of text contained within an invisible

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**Fig. 5.** Text page with palindromic sentences and verses, from *maqāma* 16. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 5847, fol. 43a. (Photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France)

**Fig. 6.** Text page with versified riddles, from *maqāma* 36, of Maltiyya. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 5847, fol. 111a. (Photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France)
rectangular border (the effect is comparable to a justified text), framed by a margin on four sides. Poetry is arranged in one, two, three, or four columns, centered on the page when single and double, extending to the full width of the prose text when tripled or quadrupled. On the page, the voice of each speaker—al-Harith and Abu Zayd—is emphasized amid continuous text by the expansion of the letter lām making up the verb qāla (“he said”), for example. The formal patterning of text emphasizes and renders legible the various structures and modes of discourse. And on a larger level, each of the fifty maqāmas is introduced by a separate title in thuluth script, executed either in gold outlined in black ink or in red pigment, that follow a consistent pattern of naming the maqāmas by their number (1–50).52

In doing all of these things, al-Wasiti was simply following a set of scribal practices developed long before in the culture of the Arabic book and used throughout earlier dated copies of al-Hariri’s Maqāmāt, whether illustrated or not.53 In light of all of these features, it is clear that the written Arabic text was a sufficiently adequate visual manifestation to obviate pictorial attempts at its translation, whether abstract or figural. One might imagine the improbable representation of the list comprising the seven “kāfs” of winter from maqāma 25, of Karaj—home, purse, stove, cup of wine, roast meat, wife, clothing—and not the figural depiction of Abu Zayd carrying a bag of looted furs and robes confronted by al-Harith (fig. 3). But such a conceptual form of visual rendering was not developed anywhere among the broad range of genres of Arabic literature that were joined by painted or drawn images. A vast number of images in different kinds of Arabic texts from the medieval period favor the mimetic representation of people or things and depictions of narrative, even when the latter are not called for by the text.54

There is one maqāma, among others, in which the written text plays a prominent role. In maqāma 7, of Barqa’id, a town near Mosul, a blind man appears in a mosque with an old woman to guide him (fig. 7). As the preacher delivers his sermon from the pulpit, al-Harith watches the man—who has his eyes closed—and woman move through the mosque. The man takes “scraps of paper that had been written on with colours of dyes in the season of leisure” from a bag slung over his arm, and the woman delivers them to the laps of members of the congregation who appear to be charitable.55 One falls into al-Harith’s hands, and when he reads it he discovers alliterative and punning verses. Al-Harith immediately suspects that the blind man might be Abu Zayd. Now the woman works her way through the assembly to collect the papers and donations and then leaves. When she is united with Abu Zayd, she discovers that one scrap of paper is still missing. As the woman returns to the mosque to retrieve it, she meets al-Harith, who says that he will pay her one dirham if she reveals its author’s identity. She tells him only that the man is from Saruj and grabs the coin. Al-Harith, fearful that it is Abu Zayd and that he has actually gone blind, eventually meets up with the trickster. When al-Harith is alone with Abu Zayd, the hero opens his eyes to reveal perfect eyesight. In its use of the written text as a means of exchange, this maqāma further thematizes the written form of language and hence discourse as a visual medium.

A second dimension to the word-image conundrum—which has persisted as a red herring—relates to the modern critical reception of al-Hariri’s Maqāmāt. Though early literary historians, the learned people who wrote commentaries on the text, clearly favored its verbal acrobatics and scholarly language—really an anachronism in its own time—recent approaches to the fifty maqāmas have restored the importance of narrative and also suggested a thematic coherence across the fifty assemblies.56 But of course this new appreciation of the text is one already suggested by those several medieval manuscripts that contain developed programs of paintings: the point to be emphasized here is that the Maqāmāt was illustrated not only because the stories were appealing and entertaining but because the stories also played an integral role in the larger themes of al-Hariri’s text, one of which is the play between truth and falsehood, between semblance and dissemblance.57

These problems between word and image can also be addressed by a shift in emphasis. What happens if we view the Maqāmāt text as staging a particular form of collaboration with images, a potential to be realized in some illustrated versions of it? Instead of emphasizing what is perceived as an irreconcilable difference between the capacities of word and image—and
In Pursuit of Shado

Maqāmāt, I examine the frame story and visualizations of discourse; the structure of the maqāma and the Maqāmāt; “Confession,” maqāma 50, of Basra; and, in the conclusion, the “pursuit of shadows.”

THE 1237 MAQĀMĀT COPIED AND ILLUSTRATED BY AL-WASITI

The 1237 Maqāmāt opens with an illuminated title—a broad rectangle flanked by two discs—executed in gold, black ink, white, and blue opaque pigments. The simple title, al-maqāmāt al-harīrīya, is rendered in a white thuluth script set over an animated leafy scroll (fig. 8). It is followed by a double-page painting (fols. 1b–2a) of an audience divided over the two pages,

Fig. 7. Abu Zayd in a mosque pretending to be blind and led by a woman through the congregation of worshippers, maqāma 7, of Barqaʿid. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 5847, fol. 18b. (Photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France)
parting knowledge to students.60 These kinds of images establish through representation the basis of the authority of the text as a form of visual license, but also underscore a cultural concern with the transmission of knowledge and the biographical foundation of each discipline.61 Al-Hariri’s preface begins immediately on the next page, introduced by a caption in thuluth script, painted in gold and outlined in black, and each individual maqāma, also separately captioned, follows in sequence number one through fifty, the ninety-nine paintings interspersed among the remaining folios (see table 1).62

The 1237 Maqāmāt is one of only a very few medieval illustrated Arabic manuscripts that gives the name of the illustrator, in this case the same person who copied the text. While the colophon provides these details, al-Wasiti’s extended name tracing four generations, and a detailed timing of the manuscript’s completion—“at the conclusion of the day, Saturday 7 Ramadan, [in] the year 634 [May 4, 1237]” (ākhir nahār yawm al-sabt sādis shahr Ramaḍān sanati arbaʿa wa thalāthīn wa sittamiʿa)—there is no mention of a place or patron (fig. 9). The location of production of the 1237 Maqāmāt is generally believed to have been Baghdad, a hypothesis based on stylistic comparisons to other dated and located manuscripts, as well as sheer probability.63 These brief details provide some sense of the scope of the work—the general sequence and internal organization of the manuscript—and underscore a key point, one noted by several scholars: because al-Wasiti was both scribe and illustrator, when he wrote out al-Hariri’s text he decided where to leave gaps for illustrations, how they would be sequenced, and how to position the illustrations on each page.64 The paintings are often closely keyed to specific lines of the text. As a totality, the paintings must be thought of as completely integrated with the written text.

The frame story and visualizations of discourse
Kilito reduced each of the fifty maqāmas to a scheme: the arrival of the narrator (rāwī) in a town; the encounter with the hero (balīgh), who is disguised; the discourse; reward; recognition; reproach; justification; and parting.65 This scheme is applicable to almost every maqāma—with some permutations/reversals in se-

Fig. 8. Illuminated title page. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 5847, fol. 1a. (Photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France)
Table 1. The 1237 *Maqāmāt* of al-Hariri (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 5847).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Maqāma</em> number and name</th>
<th>Folios with paintings</th>
<th># of images</th>
<th>Double-page compositions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prefatory materials</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illuminated title</td>
<td>1b 2a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enthronement and audience</td>
<td>3b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. “of Sanʿa”</td>
<td>4b 5b 6b</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. “of Hulwan”</td>
<td>7a 8b</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. “of the coin” (of Qayla)</td>
<td>9b 10a 11b</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. “of Damietta”</td>
<td>12b 13b 14b</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. “of Kufa”</td>
<td>16a</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. “of Maragha”</td>
<td>18b 19a</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. “of Barqaʿid”</td>
<td>21a 22a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. “of Maʿarra”</td>
<td>25a</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. “of Alexandria”</td>
<td>26a 27a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. “of Rahba”</td>
<td>29b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. “of Sava”</td>
<td>30b 31a 33a</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. “of Damascus”</td>
<td>35a</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13. “of Baghdad”</td>
<td>37b 38a</td>
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<td>14. “of Mecca”</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. “the legal”</td>
<td>42a 43b 44a</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16. “of the Maghrib”</td>
<td>46b</td>
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<td>17. “the reversed”</td>
<td>47b 48a 50b 51a</td>
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<td>18. “of Sinjar”</td>
<td>52b 53a</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. “of Nasibin”</td>
<td>55b 56a 57a</td>
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<td>20. “of Mayyafariqin”</td>
<td>58b 59a</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. “of Rayy”</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. “of the Euphrates”</td>
<td>63b 64a 67b</td>
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<td>23. “the poetic”</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. “of Qatʿat al-Rabiʿ”</td>
<td>74b 75a 76a</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. “of Karaj”</td>
<td>77a 79a</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. “the spotted”</td>
<td>84b 86a</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. “the Bedouin”</td>
<td>89a 90a</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. “of Samarqand”</td>
<td>91b 92a</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>29. “of Wasit”</td>
<td>94b 95a</td>
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<td>30. “of Tyre”</td>
<td>100b 101a</td>
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<tr>
<td>31. “of Ramla”</td>
<td>103a</td>
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<td>32. “of Tayba”</td>
<td>105a 107a</td>
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<tr>
<td>33. “of Tiflis”</td>
<td>110a</td>
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<td>34. “of Zabid”</td>
<td>114b 117b</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>35. “of Shiraz”</td>
<td>118a 119b 120b 121a 122b</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>36. “of Maltiyya”</td>
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<td>37. “of Saʿda”</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>38. “of Merv”</td>
<td>134a 138a</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>39. “of Oman”</td>
<td>139b 140a 143a</td>
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<tr>
<td>40. “of Tabriz”</td>
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<td>41. “of Tinnis”</td>
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<td>42. “of Najran”</td>
<td>154b 155b 156a</td>
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<td>44. “the wintry”</td>
<td>160b 162b</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>45. “of Ramla”</td>
<td>164b 166a</td>
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Many of the individual paintings in the 1237 Maqāmāt depict discrete moments in time, developed from often extremely short descriptions in the text, while some double-page paintings—appearing on facing pages of a manuscript opening ("b" folio to "a" folio)—represent a single moment divided between two images, which are meant to be read as a continuous temporality (figs. 1, 2, and 4). On rare occasions, paintings appearing on either side of an opening are to be understood as discrete moments in time happening in different locations (fig. 22). The ninety-nine paintings in the 1237 Maqāmāt are evenly distributed across the fifty maqāma, which can be broken down thusly: two have no paintings; fourteen have one painting; twenty-three have two paintings; ten have three paintings; one has four paintings; and one has five paintings (table 1). Art historians have explained the distribution through the inherent narrative potential of each maqāma—for example, maqāma 39, of Oman, richly illustrated by five paintings—by the additional artistic impulse to envision and depict scenes scarcely mentioned in, or even required by, the text. Maqāma 2, of Hulwan, is illustrated with three sequential images over six pages (or three folios). In the first, al-Harith meets Abu Zayd at Hulwan and they leave each other's company, although moving in a direction opposite to the text (fig. 10). Al-Harith next travels to Basra, where a man “with a thick beard and a squalid aspect” (Abu Zayd) enters the town library (a “meeting place of residents and strangers”), sits in the back row, and proceeds to join the assembly in a learned discussion of poetry, demonstrating his excellent knowledge of poetry, its interpretation, and criticism (fig. 11). In the third painting, Abu Zayd is portrayed standing up and leaving a group of seated men at the end of the maqāma, after al-Harith has recognized him (fig. 12). Before Abu Zayd does this, al-Harith asks what has caused his beard to go gray and make him unrecognizable. Abu Zayd responds with another verse in which he cautions al-Harith that no man can escape the deleterious effects of time and fortune: though life may go well one day, it is but a deceitful impression for it will turn bad the next. Maqāma 10, named after Rahba, is illustrated with two paintings: a disagreement between an old man and
Meanwhile, grabs the arm of the beautiful slave, dressed in enviable finery. Desiring to save the slave from the old man’s clutches, the governor promises to pay a sum of one hundred dinār, except the purse cannot be raised immediately. Later it transpires that the slave is none other than Abu Zayd’s son and his accomplice. Abu Zayd promises to wait with him in the courtyard until the sum can be raised and is joined by al-Harith, the meeting depicted in the second of the two paintings illustrating maqāma 10 (fig. 14). Like the other paintings

a handsome slave boy (ghulām)—the old man had accused the slave of killing his son—results in their appearance before the governor (wālī) (fig. 13). During their meeting with the governor, who is portrayed holding a lance and seated on an elevated throne attended by a boy who hides behind him, the old man attests, in a number of verses, to the accused slave’s beauty. This ruse—the old man is of course Abu Zayd—was pursued with the intention of moving the governor to buy the slave and take him into his household. Abu Zayd,
incorporated into developed architectural spaces defining specific building types—mosques (fig. 7), libraries (fig. 11), and domestic spaces, among others. Similar visual devices are used to portray outdoor activities. For example, the seafaring scene from maqāma 39 (fol. 119b), named after Oman, shows a boat floating on rippled water. Gardens or other outdoor venues can be shown by the economy of a single tree or a flowering, verdant ground line (maqāma 32, of Tayba, fol. 100b). In paintings of buildings, the environments discussed so far, a single narrative moment is represented and the principal visual elements pick up on cursory textual cues. Various props are used to identify the location—a strip of brick for the courtyard and a large cushion. Across the sequence of paintings in the 1237 Maqāmāt, these “locators” include a range of furnishings (pillows, curtains, thrones, stools, and lamps), portable objects of different types and use (glass, ceramic, and metalwork), minbars (fig. 1), mihrabs (fig. 7), and tents. In some paintings, these elements are

Fig. 11. Abu Zayd and al-Harith meet in a library at Basra, maqāma 2, of Hulwan. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 5847, fol. 5b. (Photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France)
of discourse are staged as cutaways composed of single or multi-storied spaces, as in the tavern of *maqāma* 12, of Damascus (the taverns were located in the town of ‘Ana, fol. 33a).

Throughout these discrete temporalities—depicted as single paintings or as pairs of paintings appearing on facing pages of the open manuscript—a shorthand of repetitive visual forms is applied that together make up the morphology of al-Wasiti’s pictorial means. In each painting, a distinct emphasis is given to representing acts of communication. Scenes are very rarely populated by a single figure (fol. 51a, 101a, 121a, and 143a); more frequently they comprise two people, Abu Zayd and al-Harith (fol. 4b, 8b, 14b, 37b, 40a, 41a, 44a, 57a, 76a, 79a, 86a, 100b, 117b, 130a, 130b, 134a, 160b, 162b, and 166a), three people (fol. 3b, 10a, 11b, 13b, 27a, 67b, and 90a), or, with still greater frequency, groups, even throngs, of people assembled in different venues (fol. 5b, 6b, 7a, 9b, 12b, 16a, 18b, 19a, 21a, 22a, 25a, 26a, 29b, 30b, 31a, 33a, 35a, 38a, 42a, 43b, 46b, 47b, 48a, 50b, 52b, 53a, 55b, 56a, 58b, 59a, 61a, 63b, 64a, 69b, 74b, 75a, 77a, 84b, 89a, 91b, 92a, 94b, 95a, 103a, 105a, 107a, 110a, 114b, 118a, 119b, 120b, 122b, 125a, 126a, 131a, 133b, 138a, 139b, 140a, 146a, 148b, 152a, 154b, 155b, 156a, 158b, and 164b). These scenes universally emphasize verbal communication, but the most emphatic and dramatic exchanges are projected by those paintings composed of fewer figures. Though mute, the paintings conjure discourse of various
forms—monologue, dialogue, and communication among groups of people—and bustle with the activities of human exchange: the primary mode of sociability, human interaction, occurs in al-Hariri’s *Maqāmāt* through speech. In pictorial terms, discourse is conveyed through the pose of the figure, whether sitting or standing, the tilt of the head, and variations in a vocabulary of hand and arm gestures, including the outstretched open hand or hands, a raised and extended arm, a pointed finger. A finger held to the lips signals astonishment or cogitation. In nearly every painting, regardless of the number of figures involved, al-Wasiti portrays a speaker and his audience. The viewer’s apprehension of communication in process is further enhanced by the constant animation of bodies that adopt different positions in relation to each other and to the viewer. The visual code of discourse is made especially dramatic by al-Wasiti’s richly polychromed compositions, which form sharp contours and stark contrasts against the unpainted paper grounds that enclose them. The general absence of framing—except in those examples where architecture becomes a *de facto* frame inhabited by people and their actions—lends the paintings a still more immediate relationship to the text and the paper folios that they occupy.

*The structure of the Maqāma and the Maqāmāt*

Al-Hariri’s *Maqāmāt* begins with a preface and ends with a confession—which finds a contrite Abu Zayd in al-Hariri’s hometown of Basra—but nothing requires that the intervening forty-nine *maqāmas* be read in nu-
merical order: “there is no chronological implication in the sequence.” D. S. Richards’ analysis of manuscripts of al-Hamadhani’s Maqāmāt indicates that the order of the maqāmas differs in the earliest manuscripts of the text, a fact that causes him to question J. N. Mattock’s supposition that al-Hamadhani intended his Maqāmāt to be read in order, operating cumulatively as a “‘running gag,’ a joke that provokes...an increasingly exasperated, but at the same time amused, reaction from the audience.” As Mattock proposed, if the text were to have the effect of a running gag, it would require a linear reading to produce a “sustained and cumulative” effect. Evidence suggests that the same concern does not apply to the manuscript corpus of al-Hariri’s Maqāmāt, however: throughout the century leading up to its illustration in the early 1200s, a fixed sequence of the fifty maqāmas was maintained assiduously in manuscript copies. Despite this evidence, of course, there is no guarantee or requirement that a reader would go through the assemblies in numerical sequence, and one might add that the autonomous maqāmas were sufficiently brief to be read singly.

The narrative breakdown between successive, individual maqāmas of al-Hariri’s Maqāmāt—a feature that seems to reinscribe the independence of each maqāma as a unit—has also been a topic of discussion in the field of Arabic literary history. As Jareer Abu-Haidar observes, “we never see Abū Zayd on his travels. He seems to move from one city of the Islamic world to another in the interval or intermission, so to speak, between two Maqāmas, and the setting of the Maqāma is unimportant if one does not say altogether trivial.” Elsewhere, Abu-Haidar concludes that the Maqāmāt as a genre did not “present a framework story with which the separate tales could be more closely integrated to form a novel.” In other words, the Maqāmāt was an aggregate of parts whose coherence, if any, lay not in sequence but in theme: the individual maqāmas were interrelated more paradigmatically than syntagmatically.

These assessments of al-Hariri’s Maqāmāt—if one does not accept Kilito’s and Zakharia’s arguments in favor of the sequential implications of the total text—come across as balanced and accurate, but it must be said that the illustrations function in another way. While the illustration of an individual maqāma obeys the anecdote’s autonomy, and each maqāma is pictorialized through images that show a chain of causes and their effects—with paratactical gaps left between the series of images making up each maqāma and between each successive maqāma—the cumulative effect of the illustrations has a different result. Just consider the rate of illustration. In the year of its production, the 1237 Maqāmāt had the highest rate of illustration, with ninety-nine paintings spread across 168 folios. A painting appears every 3.4 pages. The Maqāmāt dated 1256 (London, British Library, Or. 1200) is the next closest, with eighty-seven paintings appearing across 155 folios; hence a painting occurs every 3.5 pages on average. The highest rate of illustration would have been achieved if the 1323 Maqāmāt (London, British Library, Or. Add. 7293) had been completed, but the ambition of its planner—more than three hundred spaces are left for paintings, a fraction of them completed—presumably outstripped the capacities, or patience, of those persons making it. The main point of these basic statistics is to demonstrate the high rate of illustration in the 1237 Maqāmāt. This feature allowed for several images to appear in an individual maqāma, and dispersed across the whole book they created a sense of coherence and cyclicity.

Some additional examples from maqāma 3, “of the coin,” and maqāma 16, of the Maghrib, underscore these observations. In the frame story of maqāma 3, an old man comes before an assembly and, feigning lameness, describes his former wealth and current poverty in eloquent prose (fig. 15). The first of two paintings in maqāma 3 depicts the seated assembly, animated by bodily posture and gesture, and a standing lame man—who slightly lifts his left foot—in an act of recitation signified by an open left hand. Al-Harith pities the old man but would also like to hear what he can do with poetry. So he offers the old man a gold coin (dīnār), asking him to praise it in verse: this he does on the spot, “borrowing nothing” from other poets. Al-Harith and the company are deeply impressed and so another coin is offered, with the request this time to deprecate it in verse. This is easily accomplished. The old man puts the two coins in his mouth and walks away. The poems of praise and dispraise are arranged to mirror each other across the two pages of text (fols. 7b-8a) intersected...
present condition and reprimands him for playing the fool and simulating disability. But Abu Zayd prevails when he recites another verse before parting:

I have feigned to be lame, not from love of lameness, but that I may knock at the gate of relief. For my cord is thrown on my neck, and I go as one who ranges freely. Now if men blame me I say, “Excuse me: sure there is no guilt on the lame.”

Fig. 15. Al-Harith and an assembly of men listening to Abu Zayd who pretends to be lame, maqâma 3, of “the coin” (al-dīnârîya). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 5847, fol. 7a. (Photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France)
Maqāma 16 contains three paintings. The frame story begins in “one of the mosques of the West,” where al-Harith joins four scholars (fig. 17). Their conversation turns to sentences that maintain their sense when they are reversed, and the men decide to test their ability in constructing them. Each man takes his turn, advancing from palindromic sentences composed of three words to ones of four, five, and then six. Just as al-Harith fails to construct one of seven words, an old man enters and immediately pronounces just such a sentence. He then dazzles the group of men by saying that he can also offer verse palindromes. This he does in short order, reciting two poems each one composed of five lines (five distichs, ten hemistichs). After this, al-Harith recognizes Abu Zayd and introduces him to the company. The group of men invite Abu Zayd to stay with them in conversation that night, “on the condition that they should mend his poverty,” but he claims that his children are hungry and that he must go home and feed them. Stipulating that he return after his children have been fed, the men release Abu Zayd, joined by a servant who holds the wallet of money. In the second painting, organized as a double-page, Abu Zayd pulls on the wallet (the collateral), snatching it away from the servant, and counsels and chastises the latter in verse (fig. 18): Abu Zayd had led the servant down long and “branching paths” until they reached a “ruined hut” that he claimed as “the nest of my chicks.” The scene on the facing page depicts a group of seated men. The solitary servant returns to al-Harith and company, instructed
equally commonplace groups of figures ranging from three to four or five in number, or another set of still more populated and developed settings (the cemetery in maqāma 24, fol. 29b; the waterwheel in maqāma 11, fol. 69b; the pilgrim caravan in maqāma 31, fol. 94b)—also created a visual continuity across the manuscript by repetitive paradigms. The images might be seen as sequentially parallel to the text but they can also be experienced independently of it. And although the story episodes do not add up to an overarching, coordinated narrative totality, their frequent incidence and visual form give the impression through sheer accumulation

by Abu Zayd to repeat the cautionary poem to them. The basic message is to take what is available, cut one’s losses, and not hold out in expectation of more in the future. The discovery of Abu Zayd’s deceit causes al-Harith and the scholars to fight among themselves for letting him go and also being fooled by him.

Visualizing multiple moments from the frame story of each maqāma established coherence across the manuscript as a whole, an impression amplified by a high rate of illustration. Recurring typologies of image-conceptualization—from frequent pairs of gesticulating figures standing on a simple ground line, equally commonplace groups of figures ranging from three to four or five in number, or another set of still more populated and developed settings (the cemetery in maqāma 24, fol. 29b; the waterwheel in maqāma 11, fol. 69b; the pilgrim caravan in maqāma 31, fol. 94b)—also created a visual continuity across the manuscript by repetitive paradigms. The images might be seen as sequentially parallel to the text but they can also be experienced independently of it. And although the story episodes do not add up to an overarching, coordinated narrative totality, their frequent incidence and visual form give the impression through sheer accumulation

Fig. 17. Disguised as a beggar, Abu Zayd joins al-Harith and his companions in a mosque, maqāma 16, of the Maghrib. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 5847, fol. 42a. (Photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France)
of a persistent and consistent theme. In that respect they are also paradigmatic and not syntagmatic, but the capacity of the paintings to constitute immediately legible abstractions of the text made structure perceptible in a manner that the text could not. This experience of al-Wasiti’s Maqāmāt can only be obtained by direct access to the manuscript, or through its facsimile. Though Grabar’s 1984 book included a microfiche of all the paintings and other authors, like James, described the image typologies in some detail, publications of the 1237 Maqāmāt always favored reproduction of the same highly developed compositions—like those of the cemetery, waterwheel, village, and scenes of childbirth—and not the highly repetitive scenes of Abu Zayd meeting al-Harith.

Contribution: Maqāma 50, of Basra

After forty-nine assemblies showing verbal trickery in various guises, the final one, maqāma 50, transports the reader to Basra. Al-Harith resolves to go to the Friday mosque, where he sees a man dressed in rags sitting on a stone and encircled by a large crowd of people (fig. 19). After he had drawn near, al-Harith immediately recognized Abu Zayd because he wore “no disguise to conceal him.” Abu Zayd recites an extraordinary praise of the city of Basra and its inhabitants. He continues by saying that he will now “disclose truly my character” (fasāṣduquhu ṣifatī). Abu Zayd speaks of his many travels and adventures, his capacities to remove obstacles, change people’s moods and attitudes, and
how often I have beguiled the minds of men, and devised novelties and snatched opportunities, and made lions my prey, how many a high-flown I have left prone, how many a hidden one I have brought out by my spells, and made spring its sweet water by my wiles. But there has passed what has passed, while the bough was fresh and the temple raven-haired, and the raiment of youth yet new; whereas now the skin has withered, the straight grown crooked, the dark night waxed light, and naught remains but repentance, if it avail, and to patch up the rent that has widened.78

Abu Zayd then asks the audience to pray to God for him—without expecting financial reward—and recites a poem on his sins, errors, arrogance, greed, and deceit. The assembled crowd begins to pray for Abu Zayd, answering his request. As Abu Zayd leaves, heading toward the riverbank, he is pursued by al-Harith, who questions him there on the nature of his repentance, still doubting Abu Zayd’s sincerity. Abu Zayd then leaves.

Al-Harith continues in his quest to find Abu Zayd, yet again, and hears news from a group of travelers that they had seen Abu Zayd in Saruj, the town of the scoundrel’s birth, where he had “donned the wool cloth, and was leading the rows of the praying and had become a famous devotee.” Al-Harith asks them if they speak of the man “of the Assemblies,” in reference to the Maqāmāt itself. He journeys on to Saruj, where he sees
Abu Zayd in the mosque standing in "his prayer-niche, wearing a cloak stitched together with a tooth-pick, and a patched wrapper." Abu Zayd, who had become a mendicant, continues with his readings from the Koran and performs his five prayers until the next day arrives. Al-Harith then joins Abu Zayd in his home (bayt), where they dine on bread and olive oil (fig. 20). Abu Zayd withdraws to his oratory (muṣalla) and continues his dialogue with God (munājā) until the next morning, when he rises and makes another speech in praise of God (tasbīḥ) that brings al-Harith to tears. They then hurry to the mosque again to pray with the congregation. Abu Zayd’s devotions cause him to wail and weep, prompting al-Harith to do the same. Narrator and hero then take leave of each other for what will be the last time.

**CONCLUSION: IN PURSUIT OF SHADOWS**

Perhaps more than any other, _maqāma_ 18, named after Sinjar,—encapsulates in its imagery the central theme of the fifty assemblies. In the 1237 _Maqāmāt_ made by al-Wasiti, this particular _maqāma_ is illustrated with four paintings arranged in two double-page openings (figs. 21 and 22). Traveling from Damascus to Baghdad...
Fig. 21, a and b. Abu Zayd at the wedding banquet, fleeing the scene as the glass bowl of sweetmeats is presented, *maqāma* 18, of Sinjar. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 5847, fols. 47b–48a. (Photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France)
Fig. 22, a and b. Abu Zayd leaves the banquet joined by a servant who carries dishes of food; Abu Zayd departs on his camel, *maqāma* 18, of Sinjar. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 5847, fols. 50b–51a. (Photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France)
سَنَدَلُوا لِيَجْعَلُونَهَا بَيْنَ يَدَيهِا حَبْلَ مَا هَادِيَهَا. الْفَضْلُ خَالِقُ الْوَاسُورَ الْفَتِّيٰ
وَكَانَتْ يَدَاهُا لِلْفِيْضِيَالْفِيْضِيَاءُ. وَرَكَابُ السَّلَكِيَّةَ وَسَيْلُ الْهَوْىَاءَ وَقِيَّمَتُهَا حَيَّةً. 
أَنْمُى وَعَلَى هُوَءٍ وَرَكَابٍ فَوْقُهَا. فَهُوَاءٌ كَوَنُوتُ وَلَا هَمَّةٌ لِلْإِطْرَافِ. أَلِيَ
اَشْتَهِيَ الْفِيْضَيَاءُ، فَالْمَارِيَانُ نَزَّلَ بِلْقِلْوَةِ الأَلْمَاسٍ، تَقُلُّ الْمَايِهِ الْحَمْرَاءُ مَنْقُوبَهَا فِي الْحَرْبِ، كَلِبُهَا وَأَبْنَالَهَا، لَا أَخَذُهَا كَلِبَةٌ. وَأَخَذُهَا كَلِبَةٌ. حُبُّهَا وَمَغْسِلَهَا، مَعَادٍ وَمُغْسِلَهَا، مَعَادٍ.
with a caravan, al-Harith and Abu Zayd stop at Sinjar, where a merchant is hosting a wedding feast. Following custom, everyone is invited. Toward the end of the meal, sweetmeats are presented to the guests in a glass bowl (jām). Al-Harith relates that the bowl “was as though it had been congealed of air, or condensed of sunbeam motes, or molded of the light of the open plain, or peeled from the white pearl: And it had been furnished with assortments of comfits, and affused with a pervading perfume, and there had been poured into it a draught from Tasnim [a fountain in paradise], and it disclosed a fair aspect, and the fragrance of a gentle breeze.”80

He continues: “Now when our appetites were kindled at its presence, and our palates were eager for the trial of it; and it was imminent that the squadrons should be sent forth against its train...Abu Zayd sprang up like a madman, and sundered from it as far as the lizard is sundered from the fish.” The last line refers to an Arabic proverb about the opposing climates of lizards and fish, and the belief that the lizard only inhabits arid climates.82 Abu Zayd fled the circle of guests—al-Wasiti depicts him running for the door, casting a glance back at the green-colored bowl—and said that he would only return on condition that the glass be removed. The glass bowl is sent away, to the dismay of the guests.

When he is asked to explain his actions, Abu Zayd answers that “glass is a betrayer” (innā al­zujāj nammām) and that he had sworn an oath not to stay near anything that is transparent (fig. 22). He continues to tell a story that he had befriended a neighbor “whose tongue cajoled while his heart was a scorpion,” and that he once owned a slave girl (jārīya) possessing many virtues, but kept her hidden from sight.83 After drinking too much wine one time, Abu Zayd told the treacherous neighbor about her and his trust was betrayed. The neighbor informed the governor about her and the governor, in turn, wanted to present the slave girl as a gift to the prince. Abu Zayd was forced to “barter the black” of his eye “for the yellow of coin.” Then and there he made a vow not to be in the “presence of a betrayer,” and because glass has this quality, his oath applied to it.84 Speaking for the group, al-Harith states that they accepted Abu Zayd’s stance and the host of the wedding invited him to return and take up the most honored position. He was then presented with ten silver trays (which as objects made from opaque matter could keep secrets) laden with sweets and honey as a gift. A servant boy carried them to Abu Zayd’s tent, where Abu Zayd distributed the sweets among the men. After declaring that he must leave and attend to his children, he mounts his camel and departs (fig. 22). “And when his strong camel coursed along and his sociableness quitted us, he left us as an assembly whose president is gone, or a night whose moon has set.” Abu Zayd’s ruse was brilliant: he had exchanged a possible present, glass, for one more valuable, a set of silver trays, which to their further advantage could be liquidated.

Despite the fact that Abu Zayd uses the occasion of the wedding feast to speak of a treacherous friend who vowed “not to rend veils of confidence” and revealed all secrets to sight, we are more than well aware of the symmetry between Abu Zayd and his contra-ideal presented through the figure of the glass bowl. Whether animate or inanimate, the physical properties of a person or an object should be such that a secret, or a true nature, is not disclosed. Opacity is favored over transparency. And of course, throughout the maqāma, Abu Zayd enacts his ideal by appearing in various guises that make him unrecognizable, even to al-Harith, who has met him on innumerable occasions. Abu Zayd assumes various identities through a transformation of clothing (once in the guise of his wife [fig. 23]), or even its near total absence, or by simulating bodily impairments such as blindness and lameness, or assuming other characteristics associated with advancing age—such as graying hair and beard. In one of the most humorous maqāmas, no. 21, of Mayyafariqin, Abu Zayd claims to have lost his sexual virility in old age. Al-Harith and his company of friends do not know what to do, whether to refuse the man’s request for money or ask him to prove his impotence. The prose is filled with extraordinary figurative imagery: e.g., “Fie on him whose rock is not moist, whose gravel oozes not!” The maqāma ends dramatically when al-Harith asks Abu Zayd to show him his “shrouded corpse” and Abu Zayd obliges (fig. 24). In conclusion, although we are cognizant of Abu Zayd’s oceanic erudition and eloquence, we get no sense from his body or his speech of the inner Abu Zayd. Notwithstanding Abu Zayd’s many physical disguises as related by al-Hariri,
the artist al-Wasiti shows him as an identifiable person among the crowd. In a large number of paintings he can be pinpointed through his white beard, for example.87

It is impossible to establish any kind of biographical coherence for Abu Zayd across the fifty maqāmas. In some of them he claims to be married, in others he is a bachelor; in still others he professes to have a son, or children; in others he denies progeny. The effect of these constant switches is to destabilize the link between what a person says and how they appear and behave, to shake the cultural understanding that an individual’s appearance, actions, and speech can be equated with the person.88 In Abu Zayd we confront a figure of protean identities whose only consistent traits are eloquence and learning—and yet, even this firmer ground is shaken because his speech is used to trick and manipulate people into certain beliefs and actions. Despite his frequent admonitions and pious counsel, Abu Zayd’s behavior contradicts his advice, especially in his various forms of personal indulgence.89 Spoken and written language can be meaningful, but can also be used duplicitously.

And what of al-Harith b. Hammam? He is the most generic of narrators, a non-identity signaled by a name
that commentators compared to a tradition of the Prophet Muhammad: “every one of you is a Harith, and everyone of you is a Hammam.” In the proverb, Harith denotes the person who earns a living from trade, and Hammam the person who has anxieties and worries. Al-Harith is everyman and nobody at the same time. In this respect, Abu Zayd is his double. As Kilito observes, “Zayd is, with ‘Amr, the name privileged in examples of Arab grammarians: it is therefore a synonym of ‘someone like everyone.’” Al-Hariri chose these most generic of Arabic names—al-Harith b. Hammam and Abu Zayd—in response to his model Badiʿ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani, about whose chief protagonists—Abu al-Fath al-Iskandari and ʿIsa b. Hisham—he notes in the preface to his own Maqāmāt “each is an unknown about whom one knows nothing, an undefined person whom one cannot identify.” Kilito has also discussed the scarcity of proper names in al-Hariri’s work, and that when

Fig. 24. Abu Zayd exposes his penis to al-Harith, maqāma 20, of Mayyafarīqīn. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 5847, fol. 57a. (Photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France)
they are given, most frequently to historical persons, the
author’s objective was for names of specific people to
signal abstract qualities, attributes associated with
those individuals (examples mentioned previously
include Ibn Samʿun and al-Asmaʿi).92

In composing the preface for the Maqāmāt, al-Hariri
anticipated criticism for his work and attempted to
excuse it by making a comparison to the Kalila wa
Dimna (Kalila and Dimna) of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (“the
fables that relate to brutes and lifeless objects”):

I can hardly escape from the simpleton who is ignorant,
or the spiteful man who feigns ignorance; who will detract
from me on account of this composition, and will give out
that it is among the things forbidden of the law. But yet,
whoever scans matters with the eye of intelligence, and
makes good his insight into principles, will rank these
Assemblies in the order of useful writings, and class them
with the fables that relate to the brutes and lifeless objects.
Now none was ever heard of whose hearing shrank from
such tales, or who held as sinful those who related them at
ordinary times. Moreover, since deeds depend on inten-
tions, and in these lies the effectiveness of religious obli-
gations, what fault is there in one who composes stories for
instruction not for display, and whose purpose in them is
the education and not the fablings.93

Al-Hariri was correct to expect criticism. Because he
did not identify his chief characters as based on histori-
cal persons, Ibn al-Khasshab al-Nahwi (d. 1172) pro-
claimed al-Hariri’s Maqāmāt a “lie, dressed with the
traits of the real, something which resembles the truth
while at the same time denying it.”94 He stated that
al-Hariri’s work ran against fundamental principles of
religious law. Al-Hariri’s supporters—Ibn al-Barri (d.
1187), who composed a refutation of Ibn al-Khashshab,
and the later biographers Yaqut (d. 1229) and Ibn Khal-
likan (d. 1288)—were quick to resist these claims and to
do so explained that maqama 48 (named al-Haramiya)
was founded in historical fact: they identified Abu Zayd
with the person whom al-Hariri mentions meeting in
the mosque of the Banu Haram in Basra. As Zakharia
notes in her brilliant study of this reception history, al-
Harith b. Hammam is not mentioned but the conflation
between him and al-Hariri is obvious enough.95 These
historical and autobiographical functions gave license
to al-Hariri’s fictions. His preface addresses the perpe-
tual anxiety over fiction in Islamic literature and letters,
asserting that his Maqāmāt should be understood in
the same class of text as the Kalīla wa Dimna, hence
bolstering the instructional value of his work, stressing
the message and meaning of the maqāmas over the act
of storytelling. This is a good example of having one’s
cake and eating it too.

In essence, al-Hariri’s Maqāmāt is a pursuit of shad-
ows: whatever Abu Zayd might cast, it is impossible to
discern its purpose; is it semblance or dissemblance? At
the very end, in maqama 50, al-Harith expresses his
doubt about Abu Zayd’s intention in the midst of their
several meetings. Up until then, al-Harith, who has an
affection and admiration for Abu Zayd (although he
views his behavior disapprovingly on most occasions),
spends much of his time lamenting the absence of Abu
Zayd and searching for him in vain, only to fail to com-
prehend the rascal’s identity in his presence, until the
weight of the discourse makes Abu Zayd’s identity dawn
on al-Harith. Audition is followed by suspicion and only
in the very end verified by vision: al-Hariri employs a
number of subtle metaphors to convey the sensory
apprehension of Abu Zayd, mostly by vision but some-
times by smell. Like other characters in the Maqāmāt,
al-Harith is tricked by Abu Zayd, but most often he does
not seem to care. Running parallel to this linguistic
framework of successive, autonomous “assemblies” is a
cycle of paintings that depict elements from the narra-
tive, showing a series of causes by their effects. The
paintings concretize the fact of human discourse by
repeatedly emphasizing it, and depend on visual narra-
tive to translate the complex registers of the text.

When studied in comparative terms, the illustration
of the 1237 Maqāmāt—or, for that matter, the entire cor-
pus of illustrated Maqāmāts made in the years before
or just after—produced no particularly unique visual
traits or practices of picture-making: their conventions
are found across a number of contemporary illustrated
Arabic texts, from works of science to belles-lettres. As
noted above, al-Wasiti’s chief innovations within the
production of the images themselves include the exten-
sive use of the double-page composition and an
expanded number of details and characters in his most
developed paintings. Many years ago, Ettinghausen
compared what he held to be a “realist” visual idiom cur-
rent in portable objects and illustrated manuscripts to
the “realist” subjects of the contemporary shadow play (*khay ál-żill*, lit. “shadow fantasy”). Without a complete formal analysis from Ettinghausen, we can only surmise the visual affinities between the *Maq ám át* illustrations and the shadow puppets that he had in mind. One could mention the preponderance of profiles; the dramatic outlines of gesturing and animated figures; the stark contrast between figure and ground; the emphasis on crafting compositions into bold, contoured shapes set against the stark paper sheet, inner details painted amid the overall “shadow.” The flatness of form and position of figures on a single and shallow spatial plane are other conventions that might be linked to the shadow play. Many visual aspects of the *Maq ám át* illustrations embody the theatricality of discourse. But of course the finished paintings do not resemble shadows. They are not the shadows, but the things themselves fully colored and brightly lit, unless one is to take the entire formal language of Arabic manuscript painting from the late 1100s through the 1200s as a complex commentary on the nature of representation itself.

The shadow play, other forms of popular entertainment, and their reception by contemporaries such as Ibn al-Haytham (d. 1040), Ibn Shuyad (d. 1035), and Ibn Hazm (d. 1064), as well as the evident connections between literary, structural, and thematic aspects of the plays and the *Maq ám át*, have been explored in literary scholarship. The best-known examples of the shadow play are those composed by Muhammad b. Daniyal (d. 1311). The reception of the shadow play manifests its metaphorical function commenting on the illusory and transitory nature of earthly existence, where each shadow pointed to a truth (but was not the truth). Several medieval authors give voice to this concept in their writing, including some of the better-known writers, such as ‘Umar b. al-Farid (d. 1235) and ‘Umar Khayyám (d. 1223).

The several connections between the shadow play and the *maq ám át*, and their plausible shared visual effects may have prompted associations between the two media for contemporary readers/viewers of al-Hariri’s *Maq ám át* and extended the notion of deceptive speech to painted images. In other words, any affinities between play and painting might have caused the transposition of cultural values and concepts about earthly semblance and ultimate reality. Moreover, given that a theory of images as we know it for the time had still not defined the ontology of painting—a distinction between what it is and what it represents—the paintings arguably held a position similar to al-Hariri’s text, flickering between transparency and opacity, between the basic polar opposites of history and fiction, which were consciously muddled by al-Hariri. (This generic uncertainty, and the ultimate purpose of al-Hariri’s work, was a prime factor in the critical reception of the *Maq ám át*: how should it be placed, was it useful, and, if so, how?).

Recent renewed contextual approaches to the study of the *Maq ám át*, such as those by James and George, are comparable in effect to earlier art historical approaches that quickly moved away from the text and considered factors extrinsic to it to offer an account. And all this before we developed an understanding of al-Wasiti’s version of al-Hariri’s *Maq ám át*. By holding our focus on the manuscript, let us first consider how it works as an object, what effects its paintings had on their reader/viewer, how the book as a whole object structures an experience for its user. Then, one of the most pressing questions in this inquiry concerns the presumed balance between modes of reading and seeing, and a tendency to always privilege audition and oral recitation over silent reading; somehow the role of seeing is marginalized by each model. The role performed by the illustrated book in these experiences is obviously different, not least of them the contrast between collective and solitary experience, but there can be no doubt that al-Wasiti devoted an abundance of skill, labor, and thought to the way his pictures functioned throughout al-Hariri’s text.

Al-Wasiti’s images emphasized discourse as a paradigmatic theme of al-Hariri’s *Maq ám át*, concretizing the reality of the assemblies by insistently showing their events and characters, but at the same time denying its viewers firm knowledge of anything. His “realism,” advanced through several paintings—those paintings most frequently praised and published by art historians—exceeded any previous or subsequent models that might have been available to him, but had the effect of laying a trap in a manner comparable to those set by al-Hariri. An abundance of depicted things—of things
rendered visible—amounted to nothing, just as Abu Zayd’s linguistic eloquence finally amounted to nothing. Elsewhere, in al-Wasiti’s most common paintings—those depicting smaller-scaled, more intimate acts of discourse—a formal generic was a suitable analogue to the verbal play of al-Hariri’s text, to its endless, even if educational, deceptive fictions.


NOTES

Author’s note: I have held onto this essay for longer than I had intended. It seemed an especially suitable contribution to the thirtieth volume of *Muqarnas*, which is in part an appraisal of the history of the field of Islamic art and architecture as reflected through the journal, whose founding editor, Oleg Grabar, wrote so extensively about al-Hariri’s *Maqāmāt*. Since 2002, I have been fortunate to present my thoughts on the *Maqāmāt* at different institutions. I thank Marcus Milwright, Sheikha Hussah Sabah Salem al-Sabah, Kishwar Rivzi, the graduate students of the Institute of Fine Arts, and Heather Ecker, for their invitations to lecture and the responses of audience members at the University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia; Dar al-Atwar al-Islamiyya, Kuwait; the Medieval Renaissance Forum, Yale University, New Haven; the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University; and the Society of Fellows in the Humanities, Columbia University, New York. I am also deeply grateful to Annie Vernay-Nouri and Marie-Geneviève Guesdon of the Bibliothèque nationale de France for giving me generous access to Ms. Arabe 5847, and many other sources, in December 2009. This essay is dedicated to my mother, who let me leave her and family in Kelso for work in Paris in difficult times.


2. Abu al-Husayn b. Samʿun (d. 997), trained as a Hanbali but also sympathetic to Sufism, lived in Baghdad, where he was widely celebrated for his preaching and eloquent discourse. Extensive biographical commentary is provided in al-Hariri, *Assemblies*, trans. Chenery, 1:456–58.

3. Ibid., 1:224.

4. Ibid., 1:227.

5. Ibid., 1:228.


7. There has been some disagreement about how to translate the term, which is commonly translated as “assembly” or “sessions” in English and “séance” in French. The Arabic triliteral root *q-w-m* has the sense of “standing forth” or “rising up.” In assessing the origins of the genre, chiefly in the *Maqāmāt* of Bāḍīʿ al-Zaman al-Hamadhānī (d. 1008)—whom al-Hariri credits as his inspiration—A. F. L. Beeston offers a reason for al-Hamadhānī’s choice of the term to title his work: “Anecdotes were customarily exchanged at ‘sessions,’ majālis. By eschewing this term in favour of *maqāmāt*, B. [Bāḍīʿ al-Zaman al-Hamadhānī] may have intended to emphasize that his anecdotes, drafted in *ṣaḥīf*, were using the linguistic medium of the orator, khāṭib, whose traditional posture was standing”: A. F. L. Beeston, “The Genesis of the Maqāmāt Genre,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 2 (1971): 1–12, at 8–9.

8. In a commentary on this poem, Theodore Preston suggests that by mentioning Noah’s sons Abu Zayd “means that he had succeeded in enriching himself from all mankind, so that he had become as it were like those patriarchs the heir of all the world.” Preston, following medieval commentators on al-Hariri’s *Maqāmāt*, follows their interpretation of *muthāllath* as a reference to the “treble-toned string of a lute.” Al-Hariri, *Makamat or Rhetorical Anecdotes of al Hariri of Basra*, trans. and annot. Theodore Preston (London: James Madden, 1850), 306–7. Perhaps the boldest move made by Abu Zayd against his audience is in *maqāma* 29, named after Wasit, where the hero proposes to engineer a marriage between al-Harith, who is presently destitute, and one of the female occupants at the inn (khān). Abu Zayd promises to deliver an oration such as has never been heard before and in preparation for the wedding he makes sweetmeats. Al-Harith is more eager to hear the speech than to move ahead with the rite, and so Abu Zayd delivers his address and asks al-Harith to distribute the delicacies among the guests. No sooner had they been consumed than the people lost consciousness and fell to the ground. Abu Zayd had drugged the sweetmeats; he was then free to roam through the rooms of the inn and cherrypick the most valuable possessions.


10. Ibid., 1:255.

11. Ibid., 1:254.

12. Abu Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Malik b. Qurayb al-Asmaʿi (d. ca. 828) was a famous Arabic philologist active in Basra and Baghdad. He is known, among many other things, to have collected poetry from the Bedouins. See al-Hariri, *Assemblies*, trans. Chenery, 1:520–21; and B. Lewin, EI2, s. v. “Al-ʾAṣmaʿi.”

As Chenery notes in his commentary on al-Ḥariri’s Maqāmāt. See ibid., 1: 252–253.

Ibid., 1: 253; also see Chenery’s gloss of the phrase, ibid., 1: 252–253.

Ibid., 1: 257; also see Chenery’s gloss of the phrase, ibid., 1: 257–258. Ibn Sukkara (al-Hashimi) was a prolific and humorous poet, son of the caliph al-Mahdi, and descendant of ‘Ali. See ibid., 1: 253.

For a detailed biography of al-Hariri, see D. S. Margoliouth, “The Image in the Text,” Art History 35, 1 (2012): 10–37, at 18–21. But these observations are directed toward a larger argument that proposes the use of illustrated Maqāmāt by storytellers before audiences where the aural aspect is complemented by a visual one.

The illustrated manuscripts of the Maqāmāt were studied by Oleg Grabar, The Illustrations of the Maqamat (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). Dated manuscripts span the years 1222 and 1337, with others dated through the comparative stylistic analysis of their paintings. The earliest known copy of al-Hariri’s text (Ms. Cairo Adab 105), dated 504 (1110–11), contains a large number of marginal annotations recording its use over time for readings that produced licensed copies of the text. Early in this history of use, the manuscript was described as an “archetype” (aṣl). For an analysis of the notations, the manuscript, and licensed processes of dissemination, see Pierre A. MacKay, “Certificates of Transmission on a Manuscript of the Maqamat of Hariri (MS. Cairo, Adab 105),” Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s., 61, 4 (1971): 1–81. Some scholars have argued that the difficulty of the Maqāmāt of al-Hamadhānī and al-Harīrī made them especially useful as tools for teaching grammar and to preserve vocabulary and expression in their full richness. For example, see H. Nemah, “Andalusian Maqāmāt,” Journal of Arabic Literature 5 (1974): 83–92, at 88. A Hebrew translation of al-Hariri’s Maqāmāt was made by Yehuda al-Harizi between 1205 and 1216 in Spain. Based on the poor command of Hebrew demonstrated by Jews living in the East, which he experienced on a visit there, al-Harizi was moved to write his own Maqāmāt titled Sefer takhkononi: he believed that its engaging stories would encourage readers to learn Hebrew and develop a strong knowledge of its grammar and expressions. See Rina Drozy, “Al-Harizi’s Maqāmāt: A Tricultural Literary Product?” in The Medieval Translator 4, ed. Roger Ellis and Ruth Evans (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1994), 66–85, esp. 68–74.

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 5847: 168 fols., 37 x 28 cm, 101 illustrations, with approximately 15 lines of text, copied in a fine naskh script, on pages without illustrations.


Richards, “Maqāmāt of Al-Hamadhānī,” 90.


Ibid. 126.


Afif Ben Abdesselem, EI 2, s.v. “Sadj.”

Beeston, “Genesis of the Maqāmāt Genre, 7.

In al-Hamadhānī’s Maqāmāt, the authority is a fictional character named ʿIsa b. Hisham and the hero is Abu al-Fath al-Iṣkandari, though there are frequent exceptions to this pattern. See Beeston, “Al-Hamadhānī, al-Ḥarīrī and the Maqāmāt Genre,” 127.


Grabar, Illustrations of the Maqamat. His study includes a complete and subtle review of scholarship through the early 1980s (esp. chaps. 1 and 2).

The approach and method were shaped by the notion of a program of illustration, the idea that for each text there existed a set of conventional practices of illustration and that each new copy is always an imitation or mediation of earlier tradition. Grabar’s chief model was Kurt Weitzmann, Illustrations in Roll and Codex: A Study of the Origin and
Method of Text Illustration (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1947). In the end, however, it became clear to Grabar that this model of analysis was untenable. These ideas were developed in several articles by Oleg Grabar, including “The Illustrated Maqamat of the Thirteenth Century: The Bourgeoisie and the Arts,” in The Islamic City, ed. A. H. Hourani and S. M. Stern (Oxford: Cassirer, 1970), 191–222, at 210; “Pictures or Commentaries: The Illustrations of the Maqamat of al-Hariri,” in Studies in Art and Literature of the Near East in Honor of Richard Ettinghausen, ed. Peter J. Chelkowski (Salt Lake City: Middle East Center, University of Utah, 1974), 85–104; and “Les arts mineurs de l’orient musulman à partir du milieu du XIIe siècle,” Cahiers de Civilisation Médievale 11 (1968): 181–96. The notion of a bourgeoisie was first developed as a concept in the arts of the Islamic lands by Richard Ettinghausen, “The Bobrinski ‘Kettle,’ Patron and Style of an Islamic Bronze,” in The Illustrated Manuscript in Context (London: East and West Publishing, 2013). The book appeared after this essay was already drafted and it has not been possible to offer a complete and detailed assessment of it here. The questions examined in James’ book, however, directly stem from the body of scholarship undertaken through the late 1980s, with important refinements made to them, particularly to our understanding of the interrelationship among the corpus of “Baghdad” manuscripts. The bibliography of the book—based on research James completed for a master’s degree at the University of Durham in 1965—shows an uneven awareness of scholarship in the fields of Islamic art and literature since the 1990s and art history in general. For the 1974 essay, see David James, “Space-Forms in the Work of the Baghdād Maqamāt Illustrators, 1225–58,” Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 37, 2 (1974): 305–20.


James, “Space-Forms,” 306. These opinions are voiced again in Masterpiece of Arab Painting, 35–37.

Grabar, “Pictures or Commentaries,” 90.

Grabar, Illustrations of the Maqamat, 3–4.

The 1237 Maqamat contains no documentation linking it to a patron and the history of its ownership—its subsequent readers and owners—is unknown. The illuminated heading on fol. 1a bears two partly erased and cropped notes in Arabic and the seal of Charles Schefer (the Bibliothèque nationale acquired the manuscript from him in the late 1800s). The textblock is also remarkably clean, with scarcely any additions or emendations (the predominantly red zigzagging marginalia are glosses contemporary to al-Wasiti’s production). James, Masterpiece of Arab Painting, 13–15, provides a comprehensive biography for Schefer. The near total absence of notes of ownership and catalogue records—common in other Arabic manuscripts of the period, mostly unillustrated books—from the 1237 Maqamāt is a feature shared by other copies of the same text. It is not possible to rule out their existence, however, given the loss of the original endpapers/flyleaves.


Questioning the idea that “visual patterning of the text had been paramount” to al-Wasiti, O’Kane points out that some of the palindromes in maqama 16 are not separated out from the text but continuous with it (O’Kane, “Text and Paintings,” 51–52, and fig. 13) and produces a highlighted text to show this. But the palindromes embedded in continuous text are examples exchanged among al-Harith and his company. These are the prose sentences composed of three, four, five, and then six words. When al-Harith fails to produce a sentence of seven words, Abu Zayd jumps in and meets the challenge. Abu Zayd then composes two poems consisting of palindromic verses (the first in rajaz, the second in kāmil meter). These are arranged as single columns of text on fols. 43a–43b in the 1237 Maqamat. Each poem is composed of five lines (ten bayts in each), though al-Wasiti has skipped over the fourth line in the first poem. See the detailed commentary in F. Steingass, The Assemblies of
52. The red titles could be later additions, replacing damaged ones or filling in blanks that were left after the first phase of manuscript production under al-Wasiti. Examples occur on fols. 27b, 38a, and 57a. Other portions of the text, including the commentary (tafsir) titles, are written in red. Occasionally the phrase “his speech” (qawlulu) is written in a thicker line of black ink or in red, to enhance its visibility on the page.

53. The same features appear in an unillustrated Maqamat dated October 1622 (middle ten days of Dhul-Qa’da 557) in London, British Library, Or. 2790. Copied in naskh script, the text is fully vowelized and letter pointed, larger sizes of script are used for titles, the text is arranged as a rectangle on each page, and poetry is configured in different columnar arrangements. Titles for individual maqamas are given as numbers but also by name, and the fifty maqamas are divided into two parts (juz’), the first running from 1 to 28, the second 29 to 50. Other dated Maqamats, copied between the 1100s through the 1237 Maqamat, from the western and eastern Islamic lands, share the same features (though few are divided into two juz’). Sometimes the individual maqamas are introduced only by number and not also by name, and different kinds of ink might have been used for the titles (black, red, gold outlined in black), while in other manuscripts transitional phrases that structure discourse (allahumma, wa ba’d, ashada, shir) are highlighted with a different color of ink than that used in the main text (e.g., Oxford, Bodleian Library, Pococke 172, dated Muharram 632 [Sept.–Oct. 1234]).


56. Responding to the common notions that al-Hariri is “a writer devoted by virtuosity” and an “enabler of a dead language,” Zakharia has written about the author as a master also of narrative structure. See Katia Zakharia, “Norme et fiction dans la genese des Maqamat d’al-Hariri,” Bulletin d’Etudes Orientales 46 (1994): 217–31, at 226. In the same essay she also argues that although the chronology of the production of maqamas is uncertain—and they were probably written out of sequence—the organization of the whole leads up from maqama 1—where Abu Zayd and al-Harith meet for the first time and where the word fātiha is used uniquely—to maqama 48, generally held to be the first one al-Hariri actually composed and based on an autobiographical experience: ibid., 226–27. Kilito has also argued for a sense of structure conveyed by the ordering of the first and fiftieth maqamas: the first is named after San’ā, because this was the first town built after the flood, the fiftieth after Basra and Saruj, because these are the towns of al-Harith and Abu Zayd, a fitting twinning of sites given that this is the narrator-hero duo’s last encounter. Despite the fact that the order of reading of the intervening forth-eight maqamas is unimportant, he argues for coherence among the whole based on thematic echoes. See Kilito, “Contribution à l’étude de l’écriture ‘littéraire’ classique,” 21–23.

57. In response to these new text-image approaches—and to a much curtailed published version of a lecture in which I introduce some of these points (David J. Roxburgh, “Books of Stars, Mechanical Devices, Maqamat, and Animal Fables: Image and Genre in Medieval Arabic Manuscripts,” Hadeeth ad-Dar 30 [2009]: 2–7), O’Kane writes that “we really don’t need the musings of literary theorists to tell us why this text or any other was illustrated so often.” O’Kane believes instead that painters selected manuscripts for their narrative potential because these were the kinds of books most likely to sell. He also mentions al-Hariri’s preface, where the author reveals that changes in location will engage the reader and encourage more people to read his work: O’Kane, “Text and Paintings,” 53. Al-Hariri’s preface is discussed at the end of this essay, though for entirely different reasons than those framed by O’Kane. James also commented on the role of the paintings in the illustrated Maqamats, concluding that “the text was amusing, diverting, even astounding and thigh-slapping enough, without pictures. Paintings simply added a little something extra for those readers who liked the idea of an illustrated version”; James, Masterpiece of Arab Painting, 11.


60. Despite intensive analysis of the 1237 Maqamat frontispiece, there are still some problems of interpretation, especially if we are to believe that it relates somehow to the original patron/recipient of the manuscript, for which there is no direct internal evidence. See O’Kane, “Text and Paintings,” 42.

61. Several changes have been made to the manuscript since its production, and some folios and illustrations are missing. For a description of these, see Grabar, Maqamat al-Hariri Illustrated by Y. al-Wasiti, 7–8; O’Kane, “Text and Paintings,” 43; and James, Masterpiece of Arab Painting, 18.

62. Questions of patronage and location of production are not of great importance to this essay. For the most recent discussions of these problems, see James, Masterpiece of Arab Painting, esp. 1–34; O’Kane, “Text and Paintings,” 42; and Grabar, Maqamat al-Hariri Illustrated by Y. al-Wasiti, 7.

63. The innovations of al-Wasiti in conceptualizing the sequence—the nearly sixteen double-page paintings
A statistical listing of the corpus of thirteen illustrated Maqāmāts may be found in Grabar, Illustrations of the Maqamat, 8–17, with separate charts (appendices 1 and 2) recording the distribution of illustrations in each manuscript. The manuscript of the group with the lowest rate of illustration, 39 paintings to 187 fols., is dated 1222: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 6094.

Concerning this point, Grabar states that al-Wasiti never realized a consistent iconographic type for Abu Zayd and concludes: “It is as though al-Wasiti kept hesitating between creating an image and interpreting a text”: Grabar, Maqamat al-Hariri Illustrated by Y. al-Wasiti, 14. Though there are some paintings in which Abu Zayd is less easily identifiable, what came across to Grabar as ultimate failure could also be understood as intended pictorial equivocation (and comparable to Abu Zayd as trickster).

In this respect, al-Harīth is his perfect opposite. Kilito notes that while “[a]l-Harith b. Hammam is as mobile as Abu Zayd...sometimes young, sometimes old, sometimes rich or poor...his action reflects his being...and obeys strictly, in every circumstance, the code of the man of culture [adīb]”: Kilito, “Contribution à l’étude de l’écriture ‘littéraire’ classique,” 34–35.


From the French translation in Zakharia, “Norme et fiction,” 218. Chenery’s translation is: “And both these persons are obscure, not known; vague, not to be recognized”: al-Harīth, Assemblies, trans. Chenery, 1305.


Zakharia, “Norme et fiction,” 218. For Ibn al-Khashshab’s biography and his other writings, see H. Fleisch, EL2, s.v. “Ibn al-Khashshāb.”

Ibid., 218–22. For her subsequent development of the reception history of al-Hariri’s Maqāmāt, among several other themes related to the work, see Katia Zakharia, Abu Zayd
of this era, including other illustrated versions of Dioscorides, the imprint of the shadow play is also perceptible, though it is rarely as pronounced as in this copy of the work and in the Maqamat. The earliest dated Arabic manuscript to show the imprint of the new idiom is a Kitāb al-Diryāq... completed in 1199": George, “Illustrations of the Maqamat and the Shadow Play,” 13 and 27.

100. One of the main purposes of illustrated Maqamat, as proposed by George (“Orality, Writing and the Images,” esp. 21–22), was their use as adjuncts to oral recitation. To develop this point, he highlights the large size of some Maqamat, which would facilitate group activity (an enhanced visibility for painting and text), but then has to posit a “more private form of reading” for manuscripts of smaller stature; he does not then account for the many variables that could engender such a difference between illustrated books. Moreover, the strongest evidence for the use of the Maqamat in contexts of oral recitation is associated with its copying (i.e., dissemination), the making of licensed transmissions of the text (we know that physical copies were used, such as in the aṣl studied by MacKay, “Certificates of Transmission”). Notwithstanding an asymmetry of evidence, a verified context (the creation of books) versus a conjectured one (the activation of books by recitation), in the actual use of Maqamat manuscripts—George’s essay is replete with many useful historical references to practices of storytelling and develops some of the same points made in his earlier “Illustrations of the Maqamat and the Shadow Play.” Even if we accept George’s point—that the illustrated Maqamat “were, in sum, probably meant to be used and appreciated in a convivial setting centred on the oral delivery of the text” (ibid., 22)—its effect is, again, to take us out of the book prematurely, letting us imagine how audiences projected their own values onto them.
One often makes suggestions, or proposes theories, without ever discovering new material to reassess them. Thus, when in 2000 I surmised, in *Muqarnas* 17, that the *Dīvān* of Hafiz originally dated 989 (1581) (Topkapi Palace Museum Library [henceforth TSMK], Ms. H. 986) was made for the vizier Mirza Salman (d. 1583), I never expected additional corroborating elements to come up one day. My proposition then rested on the fact that the Topkapi *Dīvān* was illustrated by artists who subsequently worked on the vizier’s 990 (1582) *Ṣifāt al-ʿāshiqīn* (Attributes of Lovers), and was thus likely to have been prepared for the same patron. Two additional manuscripts, which recently appeared on the art market, not only confirm those assumptions and attributions, but also shed more light on the patronage of Mirza Salman and his relationship with the artist Muhammadi (fl. sixteenth century): one is a copy of the *Būstān* of Saʿdi dated 987 (1579) and the other a manuscript of the *Salāmān va Absāl* dated 979 (1572), which are both now part of the E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. In this article I shall discuss the merits of each and try to illustrate the role of Mirza Salman in filling the void in Safavid courtly patronage after the devastating blows that Shah Isma‘īl II (r. 1576–78) inflicted upon the Safavid royal family, and hence, on royal patronage. The key figure in our discussion shall be the painter Muhammadi, whose uncanny ability to pick up stories for allegorical and double-purpose illustrations endeared him to erudite patrons in need of producing thematically sophisticated manuscripts. In conclusion, I shall emphasize once more the pivotal role of the library-atelier of Sultan Ibrāhīm Mirza (d. 1577), the nephew and son-in-law of Shah Tahmasb I (r. 1524–76), in the training of artists who would pave the way for the development of the next important school of painting—namely that of Rīzā ʿAbbāsī (d. ca. 1630–31) and his followers—and the central role of Muhammadi as the lead figure in this transition process.

I. THE 1579 BūSTĀN OF SA’DI

The 1579 Būstān is a sumptuous manuscript whose probable passage through the Indian lands has resulted in two types of damage. The first consists of extensive wear and tear on the periphery of the manuscript, as well as termite holes close to the covers, including the colophon page (fig. 3 [figs. 1–24 are placed together at the end of the article]). The second is damage through an act of vandalism committed by a religious bigot, who took it upon himself to deface the miniature figures in a most vicious way: by removing the paint with the tip of a sharp knife, penetrating sometimes into the core of paper (fig. 1). Luckily though, he lacked thoroughness in his destructive aims, since one illustration escaped his attention and remains unscathed (fig. 5). The vandal also seems to have concentrated his defacing zeal on the courtiers, while sparing attendants and commoners. The smearing on the pages has now been cleaned, and lacunae have been filled through the efforts of the master restorer Ahmad Moghbel. But the faces remain blank, as no restorer can recreate the expressions emanating from the brush of the original master painter.

The colophon of the manuscript (fig. 3) reads:

(This book) was completed by the help of God and through His benevolence. Has written it, this sinful slave who longs for the forgiveness of the Lord of the Earth and Heavens, Sultan-Husayn, in the months of the year 987 of the Hijra (1579).
It obviously has much in common with the original colophon of the above-mentioned Topkapı manuscript (fig. 4), which reads:

The (copying) of these noble and auspicious sayings was finished by the hands of this needy weakling who yearns for the favors of the Lord of the Two Worlds, Sultan-Husayn son of Qasim of Tun, may God forgive them both, on the 20th of the holy month of Ramadan of the year 985 after the Hijra (Nov. 30, 1577).5

They are both by the same hand, penned by the calligrapher Sultan-Hosayn of Tun. Similarly, the elaborate frontispiece of the 1579 Būstān is signed by ʿAbdullah-i Muzahhib (fig. 2), in a location reminiscent of his signature on the frontispiece of the Topkapı Dīvān of Hafiz,6 as well as on that of the Freer’s celebrated Haft Awrang manuscript commissioned by Ibrahim Mirza.7

As for the illustrations of the 1579 Būstān, since none of them seem to belong to the known repertoire of illustrated Būstān manuscripts, I shall explain that they were chosen specifically to evoke important events in the political life of Mirza Salman,8 who figures allegorically in each of the four paintings. Since as a group they narrate the vizier’s rise to power, rather than present them in the order they appear in the manuscript, I shall weave them into a brief biography of the vizier in order to show the relevance of each illustration.

The historical narrative

Mirza Salman was a scion of the powerful Jabiri Ansari family of Isfahan, whose members traced their ancestry to Jabir b. ʿAbdullah-i Ansari, one of the early companions (anṣār) of the Prophet Muhammad. His father had achieved high rank in the Safavid administration, and the young Salman followed suit under his tutelage.9 He soon became the superintendent of the royal household (nāẓir-i buyūtāt), and it is in this capacity that, after the demise of Shah Tahmasb (r. 1524–76), he accompanied Ibrahim Mirza to greet Tahmasb’s successor, Isma’il II, on the outskirts of Qazvin in May 1576. He was initially appointed chief scribe to the vizier Mirza Shukrullah (d. 1581),10 but he must have quickly gained the favor of the new shah, because within a year he was nominated as grand vizier (vazīr-i a’lā) in lieu of Mirza Shukrullah himself,11 at a time when Isma’il had consolidated his power and was ready to eliminate all potential contenders.

“The Syrian king and the apprehensive dervishes” (fig. 6)

This folio, the third and, as noted earlier, only intact miniature of the book, illustrates Mirza Salman witnessing, from close quarters, the momentous decision of Isma’il II to decimate each and every possible contender to the throne (fig. 6). Being apprehensive about the Qizilbash amirs’ reaction to such a decision, Isma’il moved cautiously and put a group of six princes under house arrest, each guarded by a trusted lieutenant. He then seized upon an incident, perhaps instigated by himself, to divert attention from his scheme: he neutralized the Qizilbash amirs by sending them to quell the unruly Safavid dervishes who had attacked the city guardsmen, while concurrently ordering his lieutenants to do away with the princes in their custody. Once he got word that all six princes had been killed, he came back and pardoned the arrested dervishes who had been brought to court.12

The Būstān story chosen to illustrate this episode is one from the fourth section, on the theme of humbling: while visiting the local markets in disguise, a Syrian king overhears two dervishes disparaging him; he summons them to his court in order to reprimand them, but heeds their pleas and ends up releasing them.13

The common denominator to the two stories embedded in this painting is that the dervishes who face punishment in both are ultimately pardoned. However, while the Sa’di story specifies the number of dervishes as only two, our miniature depicts one more—slightly apart—in order to allude to the higher number of Safavid dervishes involved in the attack against the city guardsmen. As witness to the shah’s sinister ploy, Mirza Salman stands in the doorway holding a ministerial staff; he signals his detachment from the scheme by turning his head and feigning disapproval through a murmur addressed to a young subordinate, perhaps his own son. The king, though, is listening to the dervishes, and seems noticeably satisfied, presumably after receiving the reports of the execution of the Safavid princes, conveyed by the lieutenant holding a bow and standing behind him. In the Iranian tradition, the spilling of the
blood of princes portended bad omen. Consequently, they were usually executed through strangulation by a bowstring; hence the brandishing of the bow by the shah’s acolyte.

In my 2000 article in *Muqarnas*, I had enumerated a number of stylistic characteristics for Muhammadi’s paintings, many of which are recognizable here, including: his penchant for transgressing the text frame and blending the image into the margins; the intercolumnar gold foliage and arabesques on a lapis background; pencil-thin headgear batons; the arrow-shaped fingers of his plane-tree leaves; and his signature motif of an interacting pair of foxes. The highly polished painted surface and the crispness of details notwithstanding, we can see the true measure of Muhammadi’s genius in the facial expressions of his various actors (fig. 5): the dervishes have an apprehensive look fearing the wrath of the shah; the latter is attentive to the pleas of the dervishes and looks amused; Mirza Salman feigns disinterest, while his young subordinate urges him—through finger pointing—to listen to the shah’s disingenuous questioning of the dervishes.

“A black man abusing a young girl” (fig. 7)

The last painting in the manuscript, from the section on education, illustrates Mirza Salman’s role in the discovery of Isma’il II’s death (fig. 7).

Safavid princes often indulged in wine, opium, and homosexual affairs. Incarcerated for years in the remote fortress of Qahqaha, Isma’il had developed a penchant for all three. Once he consolidated his power and eliminated his rivals, he set his eyes on one Hasan Bayg, the son of the ḥalvāchī (halva maker), who became his lover. On the eve of November 24, 1577, Isma’il and Hasan Bayg had roamed around town, consuming a fair amount of *falūniyā* (a potent mixture of opium and cannabis), in addition to drinking heavily. Later in the night, they retired to Hasan Bayg’s quarters, but neither could rise the next morning. By noontime, as a faint voice crying for help was heard through the locked doors, Mirza Salman took it upon himself to break the lock and enter the private quarters of the king’s lover. A suffocated Isma’il lay motionless and breathless on the ground, while holding Hasan Bayg in his arms, whose limbs were equally numbed. The shah died shortly thereafter; his debilitated lover, who survived, explained that the bottle of *falūniyā* (known as a *huqqa*) they had consumed the night before had been unsealed and tampered with, suggesting foul play from Isma’il’s enemies, of which he had many.

A story of Sa’di, in which he encounters a black man abusing his beautiful slave, provides the necessary setting for the illustration of the decisive role that Mirza Salman played in the events that led to the discovery of Isma’il’s death. Because suffocation is commonly referred to in Persian as “turning black,” the image of a black man squeezing a young girl in his arms was meant to evoke the fate of Isma’il lying asphyxiated next to his beloved Hasan Bayg. Thus, the old man watching the entangled pair parallels the vizier bursting in on the scene and discovering the dying men.

The private quarters that Isma’il had set up for Hasan Bayg were next to the secretarial palace (*daftarkhāna*), and one door opened onto the royal equestrian square (*meydān-i asb*). It was attached to the *dawlatkhāna* (government house), built during Tahmasb’s reign as a pavilion surrounded by gardens.

Although the death scene is transplanted into a garden in order to reflect the *Būstān* story, it is accurately placed by the side of the *dawlatkhāna*, marked by an elaborate dome not mentioned in the *Būstān*. The first building must be the *daftarkhāna*, with the small pavilion in between the *daftarkhāna* and the *dawlatkhāna* depicting the private quarters of the shah’s lover, where they were actually found.

“Jealousy among rivals” (fig. 8)

This illustration, from the section on justice (the first section of the *Būstān*), depicts how the rise of a court functionary to the post of vizier arouses the jealousy of his predecessor (fig. 8). It admirably reflects Mirza Salman’s maneuvers to take the place of Shah Isma’il II’s original vizier, Mirza Shukrullah. In the illustration, the kneeling Mirza Salman, as the newcomer, pleads his case before the king by refuting accusations brought by Mirza Shukrullah, portrayed as the older vizier in a red silk robe standing in the doorway and holding the ministerial staff.

In the preamble to this *Būstān* story, the newcomer deflects the attacks of his rival by arguing that:
While some of these verses seem to be better than others in terms of encapsulating the key theme around which this miniature should have been composed, the artist instead selected a verse in which the functionary cites, as proof of his devotion to the king, his long years of service in his retinue and how he lost his pearl-like teeth in the process:

How can he not say bad things about me, the jealous rival who sees me taking his place.

One must run far away, from the malevolence of a vizier who lost face by my rise to prominence.

We can only assume that the prominence of this verse in the composition was an obvious clue to the identity of Mirza Salman, one that a contemporary reader would have immediately understood. Unfortunately, no other document gives us a physical description of Mirza Salman to ascertain the veracity of this hypothesis. Two additional clues, however, corroborate the identity of the kneeling man: a) he has a golden pen box tucked into his waistband, befitting Mirza Salman’s position as chief scribe before his assumption of the vizierate; and b) he is depicted with a distinctive black beard (figs. 9 and 11), consistent not only with all other images of him in this manuscript, but also with the elaborate face of a dervish depicted by the artist Shaykh Muhammad, which I had previously surmised to represent Mirza Salman (fig. 10).

“A devout man being beheaded unjustly” (fig. 12)

The second illustration of the manuscript, also from the section on justice, is its grandest. It fittingly evokes the crucial event that propelled Mirza Salman to the forefront of the political stage and placed the reins of power in his hands, albeit for only a few years.

After Isma’il II’s death, the amirs “in the company of the Asaf of the age [i.e., Mirza Salman] went to Pari Khan Khanum [d. 1578] in order to discuss the fate of the kingdom and kingship.” The latter was Tahmasb’s influential daughter, who in the last years of her father’s reign had become all powerful and acted as his **éminence grise**. Upon the death of Tahmasb, she championed the cause of Isma’il against all other candidates, thinking that some twenty years in prison had taken a toll on him, and that she could continue to play her role of **éminence grise** as before. But contrary to her expectations, no sooner had Isma’il ascended to the throne than he put her under house arrest and lured her powerful uncle, the Circassian Shamkhal Sultan (d. 1578), into the circle of his close lieutenants in charge of princely executions.

Mirza Salman knew very well that with Isma’il II gone, Pari Khan Khanum would take revenge on all those who had prospered at her expense, especially the grand vizier. Therefore, before the princess could close the gates of the city, he escaped toward Shiraz, where the only surviving son of Tahmasb, the blind Shah Muhammad (r. 1578–87), was preparing to go to the capital. In Shiraz, he offered his services to the new king and his very ambitious wife, Mahd-i Ulya (d. 1579), in whom he saw an ally against Pari Khan Khanum. Mahd-i Ulya quickly understood that unless the princess were eliminated, the amirs would gravitate toward her and not the queen. Thus, her first act upon arrival in Qazvin was to order the execution of Pari Khan Khanum, along with her uncle, Shamkhal Sultan. The road was then cleared for the vizier not only to assume control of the administration, as before, but also to hold sway over the military, supposedly on behalf of the queen.

A joint attack by the Ottoman commander Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha (d. 1584) and the Crimean Tatar prince ‘Adil Giray Khan (d. 1578) provided the opportunity for Mirza Salman to prove his military valor. The invaders were defeated, Osman Pasha fled to Shirvan, and ‘Adil Giray Khan was captured. Rather than allowing Mirza Salman to pursue his campaign, the queen summoned him back to court, along with his prisoner.
Capitalizing on “her” military victory, Mahd-i Ulya decided to settle some old scores with her own cousins, who, by a decision of Tahmasb, had taken the governorship of Mazandaran, once a fiefdom of her father. The first military expedition resulted in the capture of a local governor named Shams al-Din-i Div (d. 1578). Angry at the amirs’ failure to capture Mirza Khan (d. 1578), the ruler of Mazandaran, whom she saw as a usurper, she ordered a new expedition. The two veteran commanders, Pira Muhammad and Shahrukh Sultan, realized that they could not seize the lofty mountain fortress in which Mirza Khan had taken refuge. They therefore negotiated his surrender by giving their word that he would not be executed. Meanwhile, Mahd-i Ulya not only commanded the execution of the Tatar prisoner, but paraded Shams al-Din through the city in a most humiliating way before killing him. When Mirza Khan arrived, she ordered his execution as well, despite the objections of the veteran amirs and the pleas from various courtiers for clemency. Seeing the vengefulness of the queen and fearing for their own lives, the Qizilbash amirs decided to eliminate her and she was executed shortly thereafter.27

The one who gained the most from all these events was, of course, Mirza Salman, who had a hand in the plot and now stood unchallenged in the political arena. With all his rivals eliminated, he further consolidated his position by marrying his daughter to the young prince Hamza Mirza (d. 1586), the elder son of the blind Shah Muhammad.28 But less than two years later, the vizier’s arrogance caused his own downfall, and he in turn was assassinated by the very Qizilbash amirs whom he had used to eliminate his enemies.

As a defining moment in the political career of Mirza Salman, the killing of Mirza Khan thus constituted an event that had to be grandly illustrated. To portray this scene, Muhammad used the Būstān story of the beheading of an innocent, devout man on the order of the famous Umayyad viceroy of Iran, Hajjaj b. Yusuf (d. 714),29 in lieu of the beheading of Mirza Khan, whom the Safavid chronicles describe as Sayyidzāda-i bīgunāh (the innocent descendant of the Prophet Muhammad).30

At the same time, the killing of the queen was a reprehensible deed that needed justification. It had to be portrayed as a reaction to an odious act, one reviled even by the queen’s own son. The verses embedded at the top of the page, which explain the subject of the illustration, emphasize this point. But in the manuscripts of this period, this verse appears in two ways: in some, it is an anonymous person (yakī [one]) who addresses the king, but in others, it is the son (pisar) who stands before the ruler and pleads for the innocence of the about-to-be-executed kneeling man (in the table below, the former is presented in parentheses, while our manuscript’s version is underlined):31

\[
\text{(One) His son told him,} \\
\text{O great king,} \\
\text{(come,) let this pious man be free, at once.}
\]

Whom many trust and rely upon, it is not wise to alienate with one stroke so many people.

Whether by chance or by choice, the version adopted for this manuscript is the one that most emphasized the opposition of Hamza Mirza to the king’s decision (in reality his mother’s) to behead the innocent sayyid.

II. INHERITING THE IBRAHIM Mirza
LIBRARY-ATELIER

With the discovery of this Būstān manuscript, which we have argued was commissioned by Mirza Salman, we can see that soon after the demise of Ibrahim Mirza, the vizier appropriated for himself the services of two painters from the prince’s library-atelier, namely, Abdullah-i Muzahhib and Muhammad. From whom he would later commission more works. This should come as no surprise, since his position as superintendent of royal households under Tahmasb had brought him into close contact with Ibrahim Mirza, who was court minister (ishik aqāsi bāshi) at that time.32 By the year 1579, the senior contributors to the prince’s celebrated Haft Awrang (Freer 46.12), namely, Aqa Mirak, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, Mirza ‘Ali, and Muzaffar ‘Ali must have either all died or been incapacitated.33 The hand of Shaykh
Muhammad (fl. latter half of the sixteenth century), however, who was younger and still alive, is conspicuously absent in the first two manuscripts of the vizier, i.e., his 1579 Būstān of Saʿdi and 1581 Dīvān of Hafiz. The artist’s turbulent compositions may not have been to the liking of Mirza Salman, who seems to have favored more classical settings. Shaykh Muhammad’s hand, however, reappears in the 1582 Ṣifāt al-ʿāshiqīn, perhaps because the latter manuscript was commissioned as a gift destined for the crown prince Hamza Mirza. The addition of a work by a third painter from the library-atelier of Ibrahim Mirza (besides ʿAbdullah-i Muzahhib and Muhammadi) would have enhanced the prestige of such a work, but his subtle humor may have amused the young prince as well. Indeed, in the last painting of said manuscript, namely “The poor man and the prince,” Shaykh Muhammad adds a humorous touch by twisting the foot of the polo-playing prince backward (fig. 13). As a result, his foot engages the stirrup in the wrong direction and in an anatomically impossible manner! This is a device that the painter had tried for a pastoral scene, in which one of the princesses actually has two left hands (fig. 14). A closer look even shows that this came as an afterthought, and the painter deliberately reworked the hand to create a physically impossible gesture.

Similarly, in a tinted drawing that is also attributable to Shaykh Muhammad, he has cleverly twisted the posterior of the main rider-huntsman by placing it where his knee should have been (fig. 15). Indeed, the two opening flaps of the Safavid overcoat must open in front and in continuation of the buttoned upper torso, while here they are situated on the opposite side (see, for instance, fig. 16, for a correct depiction of the same pose by ‘Abdullah-i Muzahhib). Humor, craftsmanship, and dexterity had all contributed to energizing the Mashhad school of painting that characterized the library-atelier of Ibrahim Mirza.

As Persian chronicles of this period emphasize, Ibrahim Mirza’s atelier had produced a new crop of painters whose association with the prince was a source of enormous prestige. Thus, the legend Bihzād-i Ibrāhīmī on one of the paintings of the 1581 Dīvān of Hafiz clearly denotes affiliation to the prince’s library-atelier (fig. 17). But said painting is visibly attributable to Muhammadi, and, as argued elsewhere, this added attribution must have been the result of confusing explanations provided by the Safavid mission that brought the manuscript to the Porte, circa 1587. Members of that mission were surely trying to enhance the value of their gifts by explaining that Muhammadi was like the “Bihzad” of Ibrahim Mirza. The metaphor was probably lost on the Ottomans, who simply seem to have understood the painter’s name as Bihzād-i Ibrāhīmī. From our perspective, though, this appellation is indicative of the state of mind of the Safavid delegation, as well as of the prestige of Ibrahim Mirza’s atelier in Safavid circles. Bypassing any reference to Tahmasb, they were equating Ibrahim Mirza’s library-atelier with that of the Timurid Sultan Husayn Bayqara (r. 1469–1506), and regarded the painter Muhammadi as its Bihzad.

The Gulistan Library’s Silsilat al-dhahab

If Muhammadi was really the star of Ibrahim Mirza’s atelier—at least in its latter days—we should be able to find more of his works from this period. I believe that an illustrated manuscript of the Silsilat al-dhahab of Jami at the Gulistan Library in Tehran (no. 671), copied in Ramadan 977 (February–March 1570) by the calligrapher Babashah, may be relevant in this respect. Although of modest size (24.5 cm × 15.5 cm), it is distinguished by its glittering, gold-speckled margins and the beauty of its fourteen miniatures, a few of which are attributable to Muhammadi. “Moses carrying a sheep on his shoulders” (fig. 20), for instance, already incorporates many elements that we have recognized as characteristic of his style: a typical ascending mountainous landscape sprinkled with red and blue flowers, an imposing plane tree with his favored autumn-colored leaves, a prominent running stream, and, most importantly, a goat descending the rocks alongside his favorite black-and-white colored goat. This is a subject that he revisited in the 1580s, with his single contribution to Hamza Mirza’s magnificent Haft Awrang (TSMK, Ms. H. 1483, fol. 10b). Another painting, “The imam Zayn al-ʿAbidin visiting the Ka’ba” (fig. 21), displays Muhammadi’s fondness for scrollwork illumination, visible on the blue and black portions of the Ka’ba coverings. As for the faces, one can already notice his penchant for open-ended eye contours as well as for a black beauty spot on the cheek, which characterizes, for instance, the face of the prince

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and even that of simple attendants in his painting in the 1582 Ṣifāt al-ʿāshiqīn (figs. 18 and 19).40

This manuscript also puts into evidence Muhammadi’s talents as an illuminator and book cover painter. We had previously attributed a Topkapı binding to him on the basis of its figures.41 The illumination pattern on the binding here (fig. 22) ties in with the margin illumination of the “Jealousy among rivals” in the Būstān, as well as the decorative scheme of the back wall therein, especially in terms of its pheasants perched in the trees and flapping their wings (fig. 8). We thus see in Muhammadi an accomplished painter who could by himself manage the entire illustrative and decorative program of a manuscript, including its binding.

While the study of this magnificent manuscript merits a separate monograph, on the basis of the published material, one can already attribute at least two paintings to Muzaffar-ʿAli, as well as one to ʿAbdullah-i Muzahhib.42 Therefore, not only does its roster of artists point to an affiliation with the library-atelier of Ibrahim Mirza, but its sumptuousness vouches for an expensive production affordable only by a prince of high rank. As for Babashah, he was the master calligrapher who was credited with bringing the nastaʿlīq script to full maturity during the sixteenth century.43 And as such, he was the most accomplished calligrapher of his age, and the most suitable choice for a connoisseur such as Ibrahim Mirza, in lieu of calligraphers like Malik-i Daylami (d. 1562), who had participated in the production of the Freer Haft Awrang but was no longer available. It is with the Gulistan Library’s Sīsīlat al-dhahab in mind that we shall speculate on the patronage of our next manuscript.

The Salāmān va Absāl

Copied in Dhu’l-Hijja 979 (April–May 1572) by the same calligrapher, Babashah, one could, of course, see the Salāmān va Absāl as a sequel to the previous manuscript, especially since its lone illustration is attributable to Muhammadi (fig. 24). Both texts are part of the Haft Awrang of Jami, but whereas the Sīsīlat al-dhahab shines by its opulence, the Salāmān va Absāl is a mere shadow of the former work. Slightly smaller in size (20.1 cm × 11.9 cm), its decorative program is meager, with just the one illustration (fig. 24) and one small opening heading. Its binding, however, closely imitates that of the Sīsīlat al-dhahab (fig. 23). It is as though a member of the prince’s circle such as Mirza Salman, having seen the previous manuscript, desired to have a similar one, but unable to afford it, settled on a more modest version. Given the constant presence of Muhammadi in the later manuscripts of Mirza Salman, one can reasonably speculate that the relationship between the two developed at an earlier stage, when the artist was still in the employ of Ibrahim Mirza. For it seems that, in addition to his talent as an artist, Muhammadi had the intellectual capacity to find a suitable text and match it with an inventive composition in order to allude to contemporary events. From one patron to another, he continued to create such compositions, even during the Uzbek occupation of Herat (1588–98).44 It may be precisely this intellectual capacity that endeared the artist to Mirza Salman, who was himself fond of metaphors, and famously pronounced this verse from Jami, “To be ‘double-sighted’ is to be fickle / the object of love is one and only one,” to prevent the split of the Safavid empire between two competing factions, one supporting Hamza Mirza and the other his younger brother, ‘Abbas, the future Shah ‘Abbas I (r. 1587–1628).45

CONCLUSION

In the person of Mirza Salman we can see a patron who was well acquainted with the library-atelier of Ibrahim Mirza, who had built a rapport with its artists, and who, for a short while after the demise of the prince, picked up his mantle and began to commission a series of prestigious manuscripts in the same tradition. At the center of this new activity stood Muhammadi, who, by mixing the styles of his predecessors, namely Mirza ʿAli and Shaykh Muhammad, pushed the development of Persian painting into a looser and more fluid mode, thereby paving the way for the next generation of painters.46

While there was perhaps a short lull in patronage from the assassination of Ibrahim Mirza to the ascendance of Mirza Salman—in which period Muhammadi reverted to tinted drawings47—the vizier’s ambition to pick up the mantle of Ibrahim Mirza must have generated much hope for the remaining Safavid artists. In addition, the coming of age of Hamza Mirza and the for-
mation of his princely atelier invigorated Safavid artistic activity. In both cases, the lead artist had been trained in the atelier of Ibrahim Mirza: the vizier had taken Muhammadi under his wings, while the prince relied on Farrukh Beyg, who was from a family of Georgian slaves devoted to the Safavid household. Even though the vizier had strengthened his ties to Hamza Mirza by giving him his own daughter in marriage, one feels that there was nevertheless a sense of competition between the two in terms of patronage. The prince, however, had the edge because of his vaster resources—not only in terms of artists but also because of the works he had inherited from Ibrahim Mirza’s atelier, such as the unfinished *Haft Awrang* (TSMK, Ms. H.1483), which he gave to Farrukh Beyg to refurbish. Both ateliers were short-lived and disappeared with the early deaths of their respective patrons, Mirza Salman in 1583, and Hamza Mirza in 1586. In terms of a legacy though, it was the school of Muhammadi that marked the next generation of Persian artists. Muhammadi’s fluid style and airy penmanship had a lasting impact because it was adopted and propagated by the celebrated Riza ‘Abbas—who referred to Muhammadi as *ustād* (master). On the other hand, Farrukh Beyg’s highly polished style and his emphasis on elaborate idiosyncratic facial expressions were best suited to the Indian subcontinent—where he took refuge after leaving the Safavid court circa 1585—and abandoned in Iran after his departure.

Finally, should our assessment of the patronage of the 1572 *Salāmān va Absāl* and 1579 *Būstān* manuscripts be correct, we can view them as evidence of a growing trend among non-royal patrons who commissioned illustrated manuscripts in parallel or in competition with princely ateliers. But in this context, it is the occasional interaction of erudite viziers such as Mirza Salman with sophisticated painters such as Muhammadi that gave rise to the creation of sumptuous but enigmatic manuscripts such as the 1579 *Būstān*, whose illustration program cleverly mirrored the historical events described in the text.

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Fig. 1. Detail, showing examples of damaged faces, of fig. 12, “A devout man being beheaded unjustly,” by Muhammadi. From the Būstān of Sa’di, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 2. Frontispiece, signed by ʿAbdullah-i Muzahhib. From the Būstān of Sa’di, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)
Fig. 3. Colophon of the Būstān of Saʿdi, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 4. Colophon of the Dīvān of Hafiz, dated 989 (1581). Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum Library (TSMK), Ms. H. 986. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

Fig. 5. Detail, showing the variety in facial expressions, of fig. 6, “The Syrian king and the apprehensive dervishes,” by Muhammadi. From the Būstān of Saʿdi, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)
Fig. 6. Muhammadi, “The Syrian king and the apprehensive dervishes.” From the Būstān of Sa’di, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)
Fig. 7. Muhammadi, "A black man abusing a young girl." From the Būstān of Saʿdi, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)
Fig. 8. Muhammadi, “Jealousy among rivals.” From the Būstān of Sa’di, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)
Fig. 9. Detail of fig. 8, Muhammadi’s “Jealousy among rivals,” showing a golden pen box tucked into the waistband of a figure identified as Mirza Salman. From the Būstān of Sa’dī, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 10. Detail, showing Mirza Salman, of fig. 12, “A devout man being beheaded unjustly,” by Muhammadi. From the Būstān of Sa’dī, dated 987 (1579), Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 11. Detail, showing Mirza Salman, of “The poor man and the prince,” by Shaykh Muhammad. From the Ṣifāt al-ʿāshiqīn, dated 989–90 (1582), fol. 55r. Abolala Soudavar, Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection (New York, 1992), cat. 90c. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)
Fig. 12. Muhammadi, "A devout man being beheaded unjustly." From the Būstān of Saʿdi, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)
Fig. 13. Detail, showing a twisted foot, of “The poor man and the prince,” by Shaykh Muhammad. From the Ṣifat al-ʿāshiqīn, dated 989–90 (1582), fol. 55r. Soudavar, Art of the Persian Courts, cat. 90c. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 14. Detail, showing a princess’s twisted right hand, of the pastoral scene “Ladies preparing a picnic,” by Shaykh Muhammad. University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Elliot 180, fol. 192. (Jon Thompson and Sheila R. Canby, eds., Hunt for Paradise: Court Arts of Safavid Iran 1501–1576 [Milan, 2006], 132.)

Fig. 15. Detail of a “Hunting scene,” attributable to Shaykh Muhammad (single folio). Washington, D.C., Freer Gallery of Art, F1954.32. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 17. Detail of “Dervishes together,” attributed to Bihzad-i Ibrahimi (i.e., Muhammadi). From the Divan of Hafiz, dated 989 (1581). Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum Library (TSMK), Ms. H. 986, fol. 21b. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)
Fig. 18. Detail, showing the beauty spot and open-ended eye contours, of “Throwing down the impostor,” by Muhammadi. From the Ṣifāt al-ʿāshīqīn, dated 989–90 (1582). Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, cat. 90b. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 19. Detail, showing the beauty spot and open-ended eye contours on two faces in “Throwing down the impostor,” by Muhammadi. From the Ṣifāt al-ʿāshīqīn, dated 989–90 (1582). Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, cat. 90b. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)
Fig. 20. Muhammadi, “Moses carrying a sheep on his shoulders.” From the *Silsilat al-dhahab* of Jami. Tehran, Gulistan Library, Ms. 671. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 21. Muhammadi, “The imam Zayn al-ʿAbidin visiting the Ka’ba.” From the *Silsilat al-dhahab* of Jami. Tehran, Gulistan Library, Ms. 671. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 22. Binding of the *Silsilat al-dhahab* of Jami. Tehran, Gulistan Library, Ms. 671. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 23. Binding of the *Salāmān va Absāl* of Jami, dated 979 (1572). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)
Fig. 24. Muhammadi (attr.), “Salaman seated with Absal.” From the Salāmān va Absāl of Jami, dated 979 (1572). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)
NOTES

3. Termite holes usually indicate that a manuscript passed through Indian lands, and the disfiguration is akin to the damage in the pages of the famous Akbar-period Hamzanāma.
4. In 2005, Ahmad Moghbel restored the miniatures by filling the damaged spots in order to arrest the flaking process. Moghbel, who previously had an atelier in Houston, now resides in Rome.
5. The Topkapı manuscript has three colophons, all of which are discussed in Soudavar, *“Age of Muhammadi,”* 62–65. The above quote pertains to the second colophon of the manuscript.
8. While I could not find any of the four subjects depicted as a group in earlier manuscripts of the Būstān, later or contemporary copies such as Ms. Or. 10909 of the British Library may include one of the scenes (the story of the Syrian king on fol. 85a): see Norah M. Titley, *Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts: A Catalogue and Subject Index of Paintings from Persia, India, and Turkey in the British Library and the British Museum* (London, 1978), 146. Significantly, a *Kulliyat* (Complete Works) of Sa‘dī with 72 illustrations (London, British Library, Ms. Add 24944) contains none of our miniatures: Titley, *Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts*, 148–50.
11. Ibid., 2:648.
14. Iskandar Bayg, for instance, gives the added information that princes were strangled with a cord (*rīsmān* [Iskandar Bayg, *Ṭārīkh*, 1:212]), or with a bowstring (*bi zīh-i kāmān* [Iskandar Bayg, *Ṭārīkh*, 1:240]). The practice goes back to Sasanian times—Ibn Bahlki reported that both Khusraw II (r. 590–628) and his father were killed by a bowstring. Ibn-i Balkhī, *The Fārsnāma of Ibn-i Balkhī*, ed. G. Le Strange and R. A. Nicholson (London, 1968), 100 and 107.
22. In his research on the *Shāhnāma* manuscripts, Farhad Mehman has concluded that the last verse in the upper half of the illustration (which he calls the break-line verse) is the one that sets the tone for the illustration and provides its major compositional element: Farhad Mehman, “The Break-line Verse: The Link Between Text and Image in the ‘First Small’ Shāhnāma,” in *Shahnama Studies*, ed. Charles Melville (Cambridge, 2006–), 151–69. I believe that this was an almost universal practice and that the break-line verses in the illustrations of our manuscript also define their composition.
24. Since Asaf was the vizier of the Prophet Solomon and the paragon of wise justice, his name was often used in reference to a prominent vizier, especially Mirza Salman, who was referred to as such in the colophon of his *Ṣīfāt al-ʿāshīqīn*; Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, 227.
27. The primary source for these events is QāẒI Āḥmad’s *Khulāṣat*, 2:690–702, in which he recounts how Shams al-Dīn was paraded about on a camel, beardless and dressed as a woman, with a man hugging him from behind.
32. Dast az Iran merdoodiyar, *پیسیِرگچت ای نامِرِ زِهرمِه، یکی که دست‌آرزوی مدرِد می‌دار*.

The Furughi reference manuscripts from the Malik Library in Tehran all use the word *yaki* instead of *pisar* (nos. 5618, 5939, and 5979), except for no. 5954, which has a spurious date of 623 (1226). Other manuscripts, such as AHT no. 73, also use *yaki*, while the version of the Būstān
included in a manuscript of the collected works of Saʿdi at the British Library (Ms. Add 7741, dated 901 [1495–96]) uses the word pisar.

32. Qāzī Ahmad, Khulāsāt, 2:618.

33. For the Freer Jami paintings attributed to these artists, see Stuart Cary Welch, Royal Persian Manuscripts (London, 1976), 24–27, 98–125; Simpson, Sultan Ibrahim Mirza’s Haft Awrang, 366–68.

34. Soudavar, Art of the Persian Courts, 235.

35. For a complete reproduction of this painting in color, see Jon Thompson and Sheila R. Canby, eds., Hunt for Paradise: Court Arts of Safavid Iran, 1501–1576 (Milan, 2003), 132.

36. Previously attributed to the painter Qadimi by Stuart Cary Welch in his Wonders of the Age: Masterpieces of Early Safavid Painting, 1501–1576 (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 202, this painting should be attributed to ʿAbdullah-i Muzahhib—for the same reasons that I also attributed to him four paintings of the Freer manuscript of Jami that Welch had attributed to Qadimi: see Abolala Soudavar, “Le chant du monde: A Disenchancing Echo of Safavid Art History,” Iran 46 (2008): 253–76, 257.

37. As I have argued in “Age of Muhammadi,” 66–67, the Safavid library had been badly depleted, and the Safavid mission that Hamza Mirza was preparing to send to the Ottomans (before his sudden death in 1586) had to refurbish many manuscripts, including the 1581 Divān of Hafiz, to make them worthy of the Ottoman sultan Murad III (r. 1574–95), a known bibliophile and avid collector. The merits of these newer works had therefore to be explained and advertised by the mission that Shah ʿAbbas sent along with Hamza Mirza’s son. But in the post-Tahmasb era, neither the provincial atelier of Ibrahim Mirza nor the short-lived patronage of Mirza Salman or Hamza Mirza had established any reputation beyond Safavid courtly circles. The multiple colophons of the 1581 Bistān clearly showed the Safavid concern that this splendid manuscript would not be accepted as “royal,” since it was commissioned by Mirza Salman—hence the manipulation of its colophon by naming a fictitious “Sultan Sulaaman” as its patron. One may conjecture that the Bihzād-i Ibrāhīmī notation was added at the same time by the Safavids. On the other hand, some erroneous information relayed by the Ottoman writer Mustafa ‘Ali (d. 1600) tends to show that the Ottomans’ confusion was due to Safavid efforts to aggrandize the value of the gifts sent to the Porte: Soudavar, “Age of Muhammadi,” 66–67. One may therefore presume that this notation was added after the work was presented to the Ottomans, especially since an album page (TSMK, H. 1483, fol. 130b) that was probably gifted at the same time has two drawings by Muhammad, one bearing his authentic signature and the other a Safavid attribution naming him as “ʿUstād Muhammadi”; see Anthony Welch, “Painting and Patronage under Shah ʿAbbas I,” in Studies on Isfahan: Proceedings of the Isfahan Colloquium Sponsored by the Fogg Museum of Art, Held at Harvard University, January 21–24, 1974, ed. Renata Holod, Iranian Studies 7, 3–4 (Chestnut Hill, Mass., 1974), 502.


This paper describes a copy of the Iskandarnāma of Nizami from the Majlis Library in Tehran for the first time and discusses its various features, together with comparable examples from the same period. It then attempts to interpret one of its illustrations, hoping to fulfill what David Summers called “the most basic task of art history,” namely, “to explain why works of art look the way they look.”

The Tehran Iskandarnāma is a significant document since the medallion on its opening folio (fol. 2r) bears a legend specifying that it was prepared for the treasury of Ibrahim Mirza:

\[ \text{Bi rasmi khizāna al-kutub Ḥaḍrat al-Mawlā al-Ṣulṭān al-a'ẓam Ibrāhīm Mīrzā khallada Allāh mulkahu} \]

(by the order of the library of His Majesty the Great Sultan Ibrahim Mirza, may God make his kingship eternal) (fig. 3 [figs. 1–8 are placed together at the end of the article]). It also ends with a colophon that provides the date 839 (July 27, 1435–July 15, 1436) and the name of the scribe, ʿAli Katib (fol. 101r [fig. 8]).

The date 839 helps us to identify the dedicatee of the manuscript as Abu'l-Fath Ibrahim Sultan b. Shah Rukh b. Timur, who was the Timurid governor of the provinces of Fars, Kirman, and Luristan during the period between 817 (1414–15) and his death on 4 Shawwal 838 (May 3, 1435), just over two months before the beginning of the year cited on the colophon of our manuscript. By then he had been succeeded by his son, ʿAbd Allah, who was three or four years of age at the time, as the nominal governor of the area. At the same time, the grandfather of the child governor, the Timurid ruler Shah Rukh (r. 1409–47), had sent an amir from Herat, Shaykh Muhibb al-Din Abu'l-Khayr b. Shaykh al-Qarra'i, to assume control of the real gubernatorial power. Ibrahim Sultan’s death and the accession of ʿAbd Allah did not create a break in Shiraz manuscript production, which continued without interruption even after the latter lost the governorship of the area in the internecine fighting among the Timurid princes that followed the death of Shah Rukh in 1447.

For the Timurids, like other Turkic and Turko-Mongolian dynasties stemming from Central Asia, ostentatious expenditure on and conspicuous consumption of the arts were significant symbols of power. The accumulation of cultural prestige, as manifested through patronage of the arts, implied control over immeasurable sums of money as well as dynastic authority and, by extension, suggested the legitimacy of rule.

The Timurid princes were refined individuals and their courts, including that of Ibrahim Sultan at Shiraz, appear to have been cultural showplaces for their occupants. Ibrahim Sultan was a man of letters whose “activities as calligrapher and historian” are considered to have been “his most enduring legacy.”

The Timurid historian Dawlatshah (d. 1488) noted that he was an accomplished calligrapher, while the sixteenth-century Safavid author Qadi Ahmad remarked that he was “a recognized master of the thuluth style.” And according to Qadi Ahmad’s Ottoman counterpart, Mustafa ʿÂli (d. 1600), when Ibrahim Sultan copied the work of the renowned calligrapher Yaqut al-Musta’simi (d. 1298) and sent it to the bazaar to be sold, no one could tell the difference. Five extant copies of the Koran transcribed by the prince bear evidence of his cal-
Ibrahim Sultan was also a notable patron of the arts of the book, with a surviving corpus that testifies to his ample patronage. Besides the Tehran Iskandarnama, four illustrated manuscripts are associated with his patronage. The earliest is the so-called Anthology of Baysunghur, since it bears an illuminated medallion (shamsa) in the name of “Abu’l-Ghazī Baysunghur Bahâdur Khân.” It was copied in Shiraz, however, in 823 (1420), by a scribe named Mahmud al-Katib al-Husayni, and its illustrations are stylistically similar to those of manuscripts made for Ibrahim Sultan. Consequently, it is generally agreed that Ibrahim Sultan had commissioned it as a gift for his brother Baysunghur (d. 1434). The second, an undated copy of the Shâhnâma of Firdawsi, is unquestionably connected with the prince, since it bears a dedication in his name. The third is a dispersed copy of the Zafarnama of Sharaf al-Din ‘Ali Yazdi (d. 1454) dated Dhu ‘l-Hijja 839 (June 16–July 15, 1436). This is the illustrated history of the life and conquests of Timur (r. 1370–1405), commissioned by his grandson, Ibrahim Sultan, who requested that the author himself come to his court to supervise the compilation and writing of the work. The text appears to have been completed by 821 (1418–19), but the dispersed copy dated 839 is the earliest example known to be extant. The fourth is the Anthology of Prose Texts, now in Istanbul, which contains an abbreviated version of the Kalila va Dimna, as well as selections from the Marzubannama and Sindbadnama. Although the colophon of the manuscript is lost, a shamsa, which includes the legend “Abu’l-Fath,” has been partially preserved on folio 1r, and folio 205v has a prayer or a eulogy for “Abu’l-Fath Ibrahim Sultan.”

Ibrahim Sultan commissioned unillustrated volumes as well. Among these are a Masnavi-i ma’navi of Jalal al-Din Rumi dated 822 (1419–20), a Jami’ al-ṣaḥīḥ dated 832 (1428–29), and a Divan of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi dated 834 (1430–31). Two further manuscripts were copied for him by a scribe named Bayazid al-Tabrizi al-Sultanî: the first is a copy of the Khamsa of Nizami, dated 831 (1427–28) and the second a copy of the Khamsa of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi, the whereabouts of which are unfortunately not known, though it is reported to be almost the same size as the Khamsa of Nizami copied by the same scribe. Ibrahim’s name is associated with two more manuscripts that bear their scribes’ names. The first is unillustrated copy of the Kulliyät of Sa’di dated 829 (1425–26), with an illuminated dedication specifying that it was copied for the treasury (khizâna) of Sultan Mughith al-Din Abu’l-Fath Ibrahim (fols. iv–2r). Its colophon specifies that it was copied by the scribe Muzaffar b. Abdallah, at the order of his master, Khwaju Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad Farrajallah, but was intended for the sultan. The second is a copy of the Koran dated 823 (1420) and copied by Mahmud al-mulaqqab bi-Quṭb al-Mughīthî al-Sultanî. The scribe’s use of the words “al-Sultanî” as well as his nisba (element of a name indicating relation or origin), “Mughithi,” indicates that he was in the service of Mughith al-Saltana va al-Din Ibrahim Mirza.

A treatise called the Anis al-nâs (The Good Companion) dedicated to Ibrahim Sultan contains some additional circumstantial evidence that he accorded unusual privileges to authors. It was written around 830 (1426–27) by an otherwise unknown author named Shuja‘, who declared in this work that when he was imprisoned he was told that writing a book for the prince of Shiraz would save him—this was why he wrote the treatise and was consequently released from prison.

The Tehran Iskandarnama dedicated to this bibliophile prince that is the subject of the present paper is the fifth illustrated manuscript associated with Ibrahim Sultan’s patronage. At 18 cm × 11 cm (fig. 2), it is small and, unfortunately, not in good condition, showing evidence of having had some water damage. The text, written on a rectangular surface 12 cm × 9.3 cm, is in an early nastaliq, in four columns of nineteen lines. The rubrics are in gold thuluth script delicately edged in black over a background of floriated islîmî (foliate arabesques) scrolls (fig. 5). The text block and the columns are ruled in gold and edged in black. At the end of the manuscript, the text is written in diagonal sections so that the colophon could be placed at the bottom of the last page. The colophon, on folio 101r, is in tawqi’ script (fig. 8). This is not unusual, however, since writing the colophon in another script was a common enough practice. Two other extant manuscripts completed between 1435 and
1437 in the Shiraz style of the period have colophons written in a script that is different from the one used for their texts. Both of these colophons have floral golden decorations on either side, similar to those flanking the colophon of the Tehran Iskandarnāma. The first of these manuscripts is a Khamsa of Nizami dated 839 and copied by the scribe ʿAbd al-Rahman al-kātib in nastaʿlīq script, with the colophon in thuluth. The second is a Shāhnāma of Firdawsi dated 840 (1436–37) and copied in nastaʿlīq by ʿImad al-Din ʿAbd al-Rahman al-kātib, possibly the same scribe who copied the previous manuscript, with its colophon in tawqīʿ.

Besides the wear and tear it displays, the Tehran Iskandarnāma has severe textual problems as well. Although its leaves are numbered in sequence, some are missing and those that are currently bound together were mixed up during a rebinding process. When the text is compared with the published version of Nizami’s Iskandarnāma, it is interrupted in sixteen instances, some with lacunae, which are specified in the appendix (after figs. 1–8). As a result, none of the manuscript’s three illustrations are in their proper order within the text. The three paintings represent “Iskandar conversing with Aflatun” on folio 42v (fig. 5), “The contest of Ramī and Chīnī painters” on folio 63r (fig. 6), and “Iskandar’s seventh battle with the Rūs” on folio 97r (fig. 7). These works are also in bad condition, with some water damage and cracked pigment. The Tehran Iskandarnāma must have been rebound after being subject to water damage, since the binding itself, which appears to date from the end of the sixteenth century, does not show any evidence of it (fig. 1). It is of dark brown leather with a central medallion decorated with large pressure-molded khātāʾīs (stylized lotus motifs) and serrated leaves on a gold background.

A similar design was used on both the outer covers and the doublures of the binding of a copy of the Qirʾān al­Saʿadayn of Amir Khusrav Dihlavi now in the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon. The colophon of the Qirʾān al-Saʿadayn specifies that it was copied by Sultan Muhammad Nur and completed in 921 (1515–16), but the binding appears to date from a later refurbishment of the manuscript, possibly just before 1608. This was when it also received the endowment seal of Shah ʿAbbas I (r. 1587–1629), identifying it as part of the 1608 donation (waqf) he made to the Safavid shrine of Shaykh Safi al-Din in Ardabil. This manuscript’s three illustrations, signed by Nur al-Din Muhammad Musavvir, are in a style that developed during the reign of Shah ʿAbbas I, with the male figures wearing a type of turban that was fashionable around the year 1600. Its binder, Muhammad Salih al-Tabrizi, who signed his name on the doublure of the flap, is unfortunately otherwise unknown. A second Safavid binding that can be dated to the same period (and which is now in the Louvre Museum) also has a similar large khātāʾī and serrated leaf design.

Stylistically, the Tehran Iskandarnāma is consistent with the date supplied in its colophon. The decoration was never completed, however. The title is missing from its heading, the illumination of which was also left unfinished (fig. 4). The illustration depicting “Iskandar’s seventh battle with the Rūs” lacks rulings (fig. 7), and there are sections that have not been colored in, such as the crowd of attendants behind the throne in the painting “Iskandar conversing with Aflatun (Plato)” (fig. 5). This may well have been due to the death of its patron some months before the completion of the manuscript.

The three illustrations that remain in the manuscript in its present condition are stylistically close to the ones in Ibrahim Sultan’s two well-known manuscripts, namely, the Oxford Shāhnāma of Firdawsi and the dispersed Zafarnāma of Yazdi, completed in the same year, 839 (1435–36), as the Tehran Iskandarnāma. The compositions are reduced to a few major elements, each contributing to the internal balance and cohesion of the images. This is in contrast to the stylistically additive approach seen in the illustrations of the manuscripts completed in Shiraz in the second half of the 1430s and the 1440s, which tend to submerge the compositions in an increasing accumulation of subsidiary detail. Each of the illustrations of the Iskandarnāma also retains the contrast between figures and ground that is characteristic of the paintings dating from Ibrahim Sultan’s period.

The first and the third illustrations (according to their present placement within the manuscript), showing “Iskandar conversing with Aflatun” and “Iskandar’s seventh battle with the Rūs,” have generic settings and their
subjects can only be determined through the accompanying explanatory texts (figs. 5 and 7). Depictions of Iskandar’s various battles with the Rūs are more commonly seen than either of the other two subjects. The first one, “Iskandar conversing with Aflatun,” seems to be the earliest representation of this scene and does not appear to have become popular later. The Tajik scholar Larisa Dodkhudoyeva lists only two others, both of a later date, and the Topkapı Palace Museum Library in Istanbul has a further example, again of a later date.

The second illustration, “The contest of Rūmī and Chīnī Painters,” however, depicts a specific tale in the Iskandarnāma, which takes place during Iskandar’s visit to China, when a disagreement occurs about the superiority of Rūmī (Greek) or Chīnī (Chinese) painters (fig. 6). To settle the argument, painters from both groups are asked to execute paintings on either side of a vault especially constructed for this purpose and divided down the center by a curtain. The Rūmī artists paint their side, while the Chīnī artists burnish theirs. When the curtain is raised, Iskandar, who was asked to be the judge, is puzzled, since the paintings appear to be the same. The Rūmī are ultimately declared superior in painting (ṣūrat-garī), while the Chīnī are declared superior in burnishing (ṣaql).

Although Nizami implies that each excels in its own way, the earlier authors Ghazzali (d. 1111) and Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 1273) used the same story as a spiritual paradox to demonstrate “the superiority of the mystical experience over acquired knowledge.” In both of these earlier versions, the reflection is judged to be superior to the painting, even though Ghazzali’s version, like that of Nizami, has the Chīnī artists polish their side, while Rumi reverses the roles to depict the Rūmī artists polishing.

This story was only rarely illustrated: Dodkhudoyeva lists only three manuscripts that contain this image. The earliest one, from the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, is an Anthology with two dates, 838 (1434–35) and 840 (1436–37), which is from roughly the same time as the Tehran Iskandarnāma. The next two images of the contest can both be attributed to western Iran under Qaraqoyunlu Turkman rule. The first, from a copy of the Khamsa of Nizami now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, is dated 853 (1449–50). The second is from an undated manuscript of the Khamsa of Nizami in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library that is attributed to the middle of the fifteenth century. The Topkapı Collection has three further copies of Nizami’s Khamsa that include this scene, increasing the total number of known versions to seven.

The version in Ibrahim Sultan’s Iskandarnāma, which seems to be either the earliest or at least one of the earliest representations of the scene, appears to contain a personal reference to its Timurid patrons, Ibrahim Sultan, who commissioned the work, and his young son, who had become the nominal governor of Shiraz at the time of its completion. Of the three illustrations that remain in the Tehran Iskandarnāma, “The contest of Rūmī and Chīnī painters” is the only one that was finished. It is also the most significant, since it is the only one that continues the practice of full-page paintings seen in the copies of the Shāhnāma of Firdawsi and the Zafarnāma of Yazdi produced for the same prince.

An unusual feature of the miniature is that it appears to include a biographical note for Ibrahim Sultan. It contains not just Iskandar, who was the designated judge of the contest, but a second crowned figure as well, who is absent in every other known depiction of the incident. Iskandar is clearly the younger of these two rulers, since he is the one staring up at the image and its reflection on the walls of the specifically constructed vault. The older king must be the Khaqan of China, since the incident occurs when Iskandar is visiting him. The Chinese emperor is standing in an unmistakably deferential pose, with his hands folded in front of him. He is also submissively casting a sideward glance at Iskandar, thus guiding the spectators’ gaze toward the young king. Members of lesser rank usually assume a similarly subservient pose in contemporaneous Timurid illustrations. An example can be found in the Zafarnāma illustration showing Timur holding a feast after his conquest of Delhi in December 1398. In the image from the Tehran Iskandarnāma, Iskandar’s two attendants, one of whom stands directly behind Iskandar holding his mace, highlight his higher status in comparison with the Chinese emperor, who lacks this noteworthy royal signifier.

The interpretation of an artist’s work based on his biography has long been a staple of Western art histor-
ical methodology. More recently, within the field of Islamic manuscripts, images have been thought to include biographical material related to their patrons.\textsuperscript{56} Within this context, Ibrahim Sultan is an excellent subject, since he intended to have his own biography recorded. First, though, he had his grandfather Timur’s biography, the \textit{Ẓafarnāma}, completed. In this work, the author Yazdi recounts how Ibrahim Sultan requested that he come to Shiraz from the central court of his father, Shah Rukh, at Herat for this project, which was to be the first of a trilogy of histories, to be followed by similar biographies of Shah Rukh and Ibrahim Sultan himself\textsuperscript{57}. In the preface Yazdi explains the methodology employed in compiling the \textit{Ẓafarnāma} and states clearly that Ibrahim Sultan himself was involved in the process of writing, “with the cooperation of a numerous concourse of scholars and men of talent, who, in those days, were gathered for that particular purpose in the service of the Mirza in Dār al-Mulk Shiraz.”\textsuperscript{58} The prince is described as having “spent great sums” collecting and editing various accounts of Timur’s life from archives and libraries.\textsuperscript{59}

Including historically identifiable depictions of members of the Timurid dynasty and court circles in the illustrated manuscripts of the period had become popular in the Timurid cultural sphere. A number of scholars have suggested that various scenes from royal manuscripts produced in the Mongol and Timurid-Turkman worlds contain personal references to their patrons.\textsuperscript{60} The concept of the affiliation of a work of art as a trace of the individuals involved in its production (artists, designers, and patrons) may be important in this case as well.

According to Priscilla Soucek, who has developed a theory of the relationship between image and referent with specific regard to portraits, the seemingly generic portraits found in Timurid princely manuscripts, and especially in their frontispieces, meet the criteria of a true portrait. She maintains that although they were not individualized portraits, they “would nevertheless have been recognized by contemporary viewers as the depiction of a specific person” and “could have evoked in the spectator a memory of that person.” She also points out the importance of the setting of the portrayal, since it allowed the viewer to link the image with a specific person, and sometimes even with a particular event in the life of the subject.\textsuperscript{61} In modern studies, it is generally accepted that the noble personages depicted in the frontispieces of the manuscripts prepared for Timurid princes depict those works’ respective patrons.\textsuperscript{62}

Representations of historically identifiable persons are especially prominent in Ibrahim Sultan’s \textit{Ẓafarnāma} dated 839 (1435–36), since its illustrations are of historically recorded incidents. Several of its images are connected to events in which Ibrahim Sultan participated. Soucek convincingly presents a case for one of the double-page paintings from the \textit{Ẓafarnāma} (fols. 413v–414r), which shows Ibrahim Sultan marching at the head of the Timurid army “with drums beating and banners flying,” to quote Yazdi’s words.\textsuperscript{63}

This particular incident took place in the immediate aftermath of Timur’s death during his Chinese campaign of 1405, a year that was “pivotal in Ibrahim’s life,” according to Soucek. Only eleven years old at the time, he had been assigned a large territory to rule in China, which, though never previously conquered by the Timurids, Timur had hoped shortly to occupy. Ibrahim Sultan was to accompany the Timurid army to claim his territory as soon as it was invaded. When Timur died unexpectedly, his amirs placed Ibrahim at the head of the military until an older and more able prince could reach them. Ibrahim led the army, impersonating Timur, and even slept in Timur’s tent with his horsetail standard at its entrance, if only for a short while, before the campaign was abandoned.\textsuperscript{64} The text on the left-hand page of the \textit{Ẓafarnāma} illustration describes Ibrahim leading the Timurid army on this occasion. Although the prince depicted has a beard, which would belie Ibrahim Sultan’s youth, according to Eleanor Sims the face of the princely figure in the illustration had been repainted with this beard and mustache, probably the result of a later intervention. Other images from the \textit{Ẓafarnāma} also have personal connections to Ibrahim. One example is the representation of Amir Shaykh Nur al-Din, the seasoned officer chosen to accompany Ibrahim during the Chinese campaign and the only Timurid amir depicted in any of the manuscript’s illustrations.\textsuperscript{65}

Furthermore, Soucek has persuasively argued that the scene in one of the double-folio representations
found in Ibrahim Sultan’s *Shāhnāma* and depicting the prince in battle, corresponds to the descriptions of the battle near Salmas found in Timurid historical sources.66 This long battle, of at least two days’ duration, took place in Dhu ‘l-Hijja 832 (September 1429) against the Qaraqoyunlu army, and Ibrahim himself led the charge. Contemporary sources stress the role of Ibrahim Sultan and his troops from Fars in eventually forcing the Turkman army, led by one of the Qaraqoyunlu princes, into retreat. The prince on the right-hand page of the battle scene from the front matter of Ibrahim’s *Shāhnāma* can therefore be interpreted as Ibrahim Sultan leading his troops to victory, while on the left, Iskandar b. Qara Yusuf, biting his finger in consternation, turns back to glance at his men, who are depicted facing the viewer, as if uncertain whether to advance or retreat.67

In the discussion of works of art for which there are no known extrinsic documentary sources, the work of art itself must be brought as evidence into an art historical argument. Rather than dealing with the formalist devices of sources or influences that have for a very long time been at the center of art historical argument, a consideration of both the conceptual relationship of the work as a trace of its patron and its reception may enrich our understanding of it. According to Mieke Bal, in the study of texts and their illustrations, the theoretical question of what can be rendered in which medium is a crucial one. She maintains that texts are never fully illustrated, nor are the corresponding images ever fully understood with reference to the text, and insists that images are themselves readings. They do not function as a re-telling of a text, but a use of it. In other words, an image does not replace a text but is one.68

Poststructuralist theory emphasizes that images are cultural constructs freighted with social and personal meanings. They comprise value-laden references that are reused and reworked in building the visual culture of a society.69 Looking at a work of art synchronically rather than diachronically helps the viewer to achieve a historical reconstruction of the likely meaning of the discernible codes that it has at any given instance and to base an additional interpretation on this reconstruction as well as on one that is provided by the accompanying text. This perspective allows the art historian to analyze the meaning-making phase of a work of art not only in its own time but also as an active participant in the production of culture. It implies that to understand the historically mediated meanings of images, one has to consider its sources of influence, reception, and interaction with changing audiences in its post-production afterlife.70

To understand what a work of art meant at the time of its production, it is necessary to consider its reception.71 Manuscript illustrations, which can only be viewed after the preliminary actions of actually holding a book and turning its pages, tend to provoke certain questions: Who is to see all this? What is the social or interpersonal dimension of such images? And finally, what is the nature of the viewer’s gaze?

Images were clearly not created with a future audience in mind. Their makers had their own concerns, their own messages. For the Tehran *Iskandarnāma*, the primary viewer was presumably its patron, Ibrahim Sultan, the initiator of the project, as well as his young son, who had replaced him as the governor of Shiraz by the time the manuscript was completed in 839 (1435–36). Although it is debatable whether it is possible to “see through” the surfaces of a work of art to its meaning, it seems plausible to consider that in viewing the *Iskandarnāma* images, or perhaps displaying them before others, the gaze of the owner of the manuscript would in part be the gaze of satisfaction, or rather, of contemplation of the imagined extent of his power, which was somehow embodied in the picture as long as the manuscript lasted.72 In shared viewings in court gatherings (sing. *majlis*) by small groups of courtiers, intimates, and/or family members, it would reflect the residual glory of the important role he played for their gaze as well.73

In the image of “The contest of Rūmī and Chīnī painters” discussed above, the message of the image appears to be inverted. Although the subject of the scene is a painting contest narrated in the text, in the image the foreground theatricality of the older emperor of China, who is depicted in a submissive role with respect to the young Greek/Timurid prince, represents a competition that is more important than the one between the painters of the two realms taking place in an uncertain space within the image (beyond, above, in another room, etc.). The image interprets the text in a way that flatters the viewer into a conviction of his—or his
ancestor’s—own superiority by helping him create an eidetic space that will transport him away from the real time and space of reading Nizami’s words, into the Timurid (eternal) time and space of inward vision.\textsuperscript{74} It thus creates a personal lieu de mémoire for Ibrahim Sultan,\textsuperscript{75} who had been promised the rule of an extensive territory in China on what was to become the last military campaign of his grandfather Timur.\textsuperscript{76}

Among the Timurid princes who patronized the production of illustrated manuscripts, Ibrahim Sultan holds a particularly interesting place, since illustrated manuscripts prepared for him show his concern for personalized manuscripts as well as significant inventiveness in their illustrations. As we have seen, especially important was the illustrated version of Yazdi’s \textit{Ẓafarnāma} prepared at his court, with almost all of its paintings depicting identifiable “living or once living people.”\textsuperscript{77} The artistic corpus of his court comprises independent and highly original creations that arose out of the local tradition of Shiraz and proved inspirational for the manuscripts that followed, inducing a long-lived impact on the subsequent workshop//scriptorium (kitābkhāna) traditions of the city. The small Tehran \textit{Iskandarnāma} copy prepared for this calligrapher prince reasserts his interest in personalized manuscripts, confirming his role as a trendsetter while also subtly reminding the viewer of his military and political aspirations.\textsuperscript{78}

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Fig. 1. Binding, outer cover. Nizami, *Iskandarnāma*, dated 839 (1435–36). Tehran, Majlis Library, Ms. 61866. (Photo: courtesy of the Majlis Library)

Fig. 2. Binding, doublure. Nizami, *Iskandarnāma*, dated 839 (1435–36). Tehran, Majlis Library, Ms. 61866. (Photo: courtesy of the Majlis Library)
Fig. 3. Dedication medallion. Nizami, *Işıkandarnâma*, dated 839 (1435–36). Tehran, Majlis Library, Ms. 61866, fol. 2r. (Photo: courtesy of the Majlis Library)
Fig. 4. Heading illumination. Nizami, *Iskandarnāma*, dated 839 (1435–36). Tehran, Majlis Library, Ms. 61866, fol. 2v. (Photo: courtesy of the Majlis Library)
Fig. 5. “Iskandar conversing with Aflatun (Plato).” Nizami, *Iskandarnāma*, dated 839 (1435–36). Tehran, Majlis Library, Ms. 61866, fol. 42v. (Photo: courtesy of the Majlis Library)
Fig. 6. “The contest of Rūmī and Chīnī painters.” Nizami, *Iskandarnāma*, dated 839 (1435–36). Tehran, Majlis Library, Ms. 61866, fol. 63r. (Photo: courtesy of the Majlis Library)
Fig. 7. “Iskandar’s seventh battle with the Rūs.” Nizami, *Iskandarnāma*, dated 839 (1435–36). Tehran, Majlis Library, Ms. 61866, fol. 97r. (Photo: courtesy of the Majlis Library)
Fig. 8. Colophon. Nizami, *Iskandarnāma*, dated 839 (1435–36). Tehran, Majlis Library, Ms. 61866, fol. 101r. (Photo: courtesy of the Majlis Library)
APPENDIX

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<td>Sharafnāma</td>
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Lacunae
- 981–990
- 995–1012
- 1074–1078
- 1152–1156
- 1246–1255
- 1282–1385
- 1408–1413
- 1450–1454
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NOTES

1. Tehran, Majlis Library (Kitābkhāna-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi  Islāmī), Ms. 6866.
3. Tamma al-kitāb bi’-awni Allāh al-Malik al-Wahhāb min kalām afsah al-amlah al-mutakallimin shaykh al-shayākh Nizāmī al-Ghanjawi ṭahmā Allāh ‘alayhi nawwara Allāh madja’ahu fi yawm al-khamis ḥādī ‘ashar Fumāda al-awwal al-sana’ tāsi’ wa thalāthin wa thamāna mi’a al-hirjiyya ḥarrarahu al-abd al-dā’if al-muhtāj al-raḥma Allāh... ‘Ali al-kātib aḥsana Allāh aḥwāla(h) (The book of the words of the most eloquent and charming of orators, Shaykh of Shaykhs Nizami Ghanjavi, may God’s mercy be upon him, may God illuminate his grave, was completed with the divine aid of God, the Sovereign, the Bestower, on Thursday, the eleventh day of Jumada I of the Hijri year 839 [December 2, 1435]. The weak slave, the one in need of God’s mercy, ‘Ali al-Katib, may God beautify his state, wrote it).
14. These are: New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 13.228.1–2; Istanbul, TSMK, Ms. M.6; Mashhad, Imam Riza Library, Ms. 215 and 414; and Shiraz Pars Museum, 430 M/P. See Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, 370.


26. Georgian Academy of Sciences, Ms. P.458. See Sims, “Hundred and One Paintings of Ibrahim-Sultan,” 125n14. In the same publication, the author remarks that Ibrahim Sultan had commissioned at least five *Khamsas* of Nizami (p. 120). Sims, “Hundred and One Paintings of Ibrahim-Sultan,” 125n14.

27. Lahore, Punjab University Library, Ms. 318.


29. London, Khalili Collection, acc. no. QUR212.


32. Fouchécour, “The Good Companion’ (Anis al-Näṣ”), 45. Although this may well be a trope, Ibrahim is known from other sources as an able calligrapher and a translator of the Koran.


35. I would like to extend my thanks to Bora Keskiner, who identified the colophon scripts of both the British Library *Khamsa* (Ms. Or.12856) and the Leiden *Shahnama*.


37. It has around 3,000 couplets missing; see appendix.

38. Inv. no. LA 187.

East to West and Memories of the Ottoman World: Masterpieces of the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon (İstanbul: Sabancı University Sapık Sabancı Museum, 2006), 148–49, cat. no. 50.


Sims, “Hundreds and One Paintings of Ibrahim-Sultan,” 122, suggests that the sparse illumination of Ibrahim-Sultan’s Zafarnâma was also due to the fact that the prince died before the manuscript was completed.

University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Ouseley Add. 176. See Abdullahae and Melville, Ibrahim Sultan’s Shahnama.

Sims, “İbrahim-Sultan’s Illustrated Zafar-Nâme of 839 (1436).”


Both Ghazalli and Rumi equate the burnishers with Sufis, whose hearts reflect the radiance of God, while Nizami does not advance this mystical standpoint. Soucek suggests that the difference in Nizami’s interpretation means that his version was not based on Ghazalli, but that both were based on a common source. For the three versions of Ghazalli, Nizami, and Rumi, see Soucek, “Nizâmi on Painters and Painting,” 12–14; Serpil Bağcı, “Gerçeğin Sûretinin Saklandığı Yer: Ayna,” in Sultanların Aynaları (İstanbul: T. C. Kültür Bakanlığı, 1998), 15–20; Michael Barry, Figurative Art in Medieval Islam and the Riddle of Bihzâd of Herât (1465–1535) (Paris: Editions Flammarion, 2004), 9 and 128.


Dodkhudoeva, Poem Nizami, 262. These are: 1) an Anthology dated 838–840 (1434–1437), Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms. P.124, fol. 242a; 2) an undated Khamsa of Nizâmi, Istanbul, TSMK, H.753, fol. 304; and 3) a Khamsa of Nizâmi dated 853 (1449–50), New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 13.228.3, fol. 322a. Eleanor Sims reproduces the image from the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art and mentions four versions, but does not enumerate them. Eleanor G. Sims, with Boris I. Marshak and Ernst J. Grube, Peerless Images: Persian Painting and Its Sources (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 316–17, fig. 238. My thanks go to Olga Vasilyeva for providing me with the information from Dodkhudoeva’s study.

Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms. no. F.124, fol. 242. I am most grateful to Elaine Wright for making available the image of this scene. It is, however, a somewhat problematic image. I have not seen the manuscript, nor even the images of any other illustrations from it. The fact that the illustrations are later than the transcription of the text may possibly explain a style that is otherwise difficult to interpret: see especially fol. 279v. For a discussion of the difficulty of assigning the manuscript to any definite provenance, see Caroline Singer, “A Study of the Illustrations of the Sharaf-Nama in the Chester Beatty Library’s Anthology: Pers. 124 of 1435–36,” Persica 16 (2000): 67–107. She reproduces fol. 279v as pl. 23.

New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ms. no. 13.228.3, fol. 322r. See Soucek, “Nizâmi on Painters and Painting,” 13, fig. 2. For a color reproduction, see Sims, Peerless Images, 316, fig. 238.

Istanbul, TSMK, Ms. H.753, fol. 304r. For the reproduction of the image, see Ivan Stchoukine, “La Khamsah de Nizâmi, H.753, du Topkapî Saray Müzesi d’İstanbul,” Syria 49 (1972): pl. IX; Stchoukine, Les peintures des manuscrits de la Khamsâh de Nizâmî, pl. XXXVIIIa; Bağcı, “Gerçeğin Sûretinin Saklandığı Yer: Ayna,” 18, fig. 5; and Barry, Figurative Art in Medieval Islam, 5. For the manuscript, see additionally David Roxburgh, ed., Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600–1600 (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2005), 246, cat. no. 210; Lale Uluç, Turkman Governors, Shiraz Artisans and Ottoman Collectors: Sixteenth-Century Shiraz Manuscripts (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yaymları, 2006), 57–60. For additions to the manuscript (İstanbul, TSMK, Ms. H.753) at the Ottoman court, see Zeren Tanüncü, “Additions to Illustrated Manuscripts in Ottoman Workshops,” Muqarnas 17 (2000): 147–61. This is one of a small number of royally owned manuscripts that help us to understand the transmission of workshop/scriptorium (kitâbkâha)
practices in the Timurid-Turkman-Safavid world in the latter half of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth. It changed hands several times and contains illustrations that were added to it under each new ownership. It appears to have been produced under the Qaraqoyunlu Turkmans, when some of its illustrations were completed. “The contest of the Rūmī and Chini painters” can be attributed to this period. Some of its illustrations were then completed during the early Safavid period, with one dated 916 (1513–14) (fol. 19b). For a reproduction of the dated image, see Uluç, Turkman Governors, 58–59, fig. 26. The only noticeable difference in the images produced for the new patrons is in the shape of the turbans, which were depicted in the distinctive style favored by the Safavids, wrapped around a cap with a high central baton, known as the āyāt-ī Hāydarī. Finally, some of its illustrations were added after it reached the Ottoman court.

54. These are: 1) Istanbul, TSMK, Ms. H.778, a Khamsa of Nizāmī dated 900 (1494–95), fol. 324r: see Stchoukine, Les peintures des manuscrits de la “Khamseh” de Nizāmī, pl. LIHb, and Bağcı, “Gerçeğin Suretinin Saklandığı Yer: Ayna,” 19, fig. 6; 2) Istanbul, TSMK, Ms. H.786, a Khamsa of Nizāmī dated 919 (1513–14), fol. 319r: see Stchoukine, Les peintures des manuscrits de la “Khamseh” de Nizāmī, pl. LVIIa, and Bağcı, “Gerçeğin Suretinin Saklandığı Yer: Ayna,” 20, fig. 7; 3) Istanbul, TSMK, Ms. R.856, a Khamsa of Nizāmī dated 935 (1528–29), fol. 31v.

55. Sims, “Ībrāhīm-Sulṭān’s Illustrated Žafar-Nāme of 839 (1436),” 189, fig. 15; and Lentz and Lowry, Timur and the Princely Vision, 105, fig. 38. An image from the copy of the Žahānāmeh of Firdawsi dated 848 (1444–45) and copied by a scribe named Muhammad al-ṣulṭānī (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Supp. Pers. 494, fol. 14v) repeats the exact pose. It can be attributed stylistically to Shiraz and the scribe’s epigraph, al-ṣulṭānī, suggests that he was attached to the gubernatorial court of ʿAbdallah b. Ibrahim. For the manuscript, see Francis Richard, Splendeurs persanes: Manuscrits du XIIe au XVIIe siècle (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1997), 81; Annie Vernay-Nouri, with contributions from Annie Berthier, Enluminures en terre d’Islam: Entre abstraction et figuration (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2011), 69. For a web image, see http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8432263q/f34.item.r=supplement+persan+494.lang.EN.

56. Priscilla P. Soucek, “The Ann Arbor Shahnama and Its Importance,” in Hillenbrand, International Painting from the Mongols to the Qajars, 267–83, for example, presents a case for the Qaraqoyunlu prince Pir Budaq.


58. Sims, “Ībrāhīm-Sulṭān’s Illustrated Žafar-Nāme of 839 (1436).”


60. Soucek, “Ann Arbor Shahnama and Its Importance.”


65. Sims, “Ībrāhīm-Sulṭān’s Illustrated Žafar-Nāme of 839 (1436),” 188–89, figs. 13, 16.


70. Ibid., 110.


74. This reading is based on the constative and performative levels of images explored by Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked*, 119.

75. Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” in “Memory and Counter Memory,” special issue, *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 11–12, maintains that the moment of *lieu de mémoire* occurs at the same time that an immense and intimate fund of memory disappears, surviving only as a reconstituted object beneath the gaze of critical history.


78. I would like to express my thanks to Mustafa Çiçekler, who tirelessly helped me pick up the text from the correct point whenever it got hopelessly tangled.
The Ottoman bureaucrat and historian Mustafa ʿÂli (d. 1600) added a verse epilogue (zeyl) to his Menāḳıb­ı Hünerverān (Exploits of the Artists), which he completed in 1587. At the end of his text, the first biography dedicated to calligraphers in Ottoman literature and the only existing work on the masters of painting, illumination, and paper decoupage, ʿÂli notes that the last step (āḫir­i kār) in the completion of a book is the joining (vaṣl) of the entire volume at the spine. As it was fitting to cite in the epilogue the name of a paper joiner who produces rarities (vaṣṣāl­i nādire­kār), ʿÂli dedicates a piece of poetry to the vaṣṣāl Kalender Çavuş (d. 1616).

In his eulogy, ʿÂli provides invaluable information about the artistic identity of Kalender Çavuş as he praises his technical competence in joining and conserving sheets of paper, as well as his virtuosity in other aspects of the arts of the book. According to ʿÂli, Kalender was also unmatched among equals in his skill as a bookbinder. His ability to join qitʿas (a single-sheet calligraphy, painting, or drawing), which he composed of colorful sheets of paper, resembles the rainbow across the face (i.e., page) of the sky. No one can discern the line where he attaches the sheets; the eye of the imagination perceives these as single pages. When he joins paper and leather, even the most discerning, those able to see the finest things, find no words to describe his work. God has bestowed upon him the arts of ḥalkār (illumination with varying dilutions and densities of gold) and zerefšān (gold sprinkling), as well as cedvel (framing) and pervāz (margining). Each of his knotted patterns in the margins surrounding the qitʿas “bewilders the viewer and binds a knot around the feet of the mind.” ʿÂli also mentions Kalender’s ability to mend torn pieces of paper with his preparations, just like the “sherbet of reunion revives the heartbroken beloveds.”

Kalender, who was so praised by ʿÂli, a writer who rarely offers compliments, began his career as a royal herald (çavuş) at the imperial palace. The historian Selaniki (alive in 1600) notes that Kalender Çavuş was appointed as the trustee of Sultan Selim I’s endowments in late April/early May 1598 (evāḥir­i Ramażān 1006). He also identifies him as steward at the Porte (kapu kethūdās) and cites him among those presented with robes of honor (hil’at) after the trial and execution of a pasha who rebelled on February 7, 1600 (22 Rajab 1008). The rank of kapu kethūdās is not only important within the hierarchy of the palace but also indicates that Kalender enjoyed close ties with the palace eunuchs and inner palace pages. The contemporary historian Mehmed-i Rumi b. Mehmed (d. 1640–41) mentions in his Ṭārīḫ­i Āl­i ʿOsmān (History of the House of Osman) that Kalender was a member of the corps of court ushers, as well as a trustee of sultanic endowments in Istanbul. According to Mehmed, he worked as a keeper of the imperial purse (ḫarc­i ḥāṣsa emīni) for an extended period of time. Since officers of this rank served at the palace, Kalender mingled with the eunuchs of the harem (dārü’s­sāde aġaları) and other palace eunuchs and pages (aġalar) during this period, ultimately affiliating himself with the palace pages (kapu oġlanları). In particular, he earned the favor of the chief black eunuch el-Hacc Mustafa Agha (d. 1624), and, upon his recommendation, was appointed as second treasurer (defterdār­sānî). Subsequently, when a building supervisor (binā emīni) was needed in 1610 (1018) for the construction of the mosque of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603–17), Mustafa Agha recommended that Kalender be desig-
nated financial supervisor of construction (hâfiż-i mâl). In November 1614 (Shawwal 1023), when Kalender was eagerly carrying out the duties of these posts, the vizier Yusuf Pasha died and Kalender inherited both his vizierate and properties. He died two years later and was interred in the garden of the Atik Ali Pasha Mosque. Mehmed concludes his narrative of Kalender Pasha by noting that he was not only moderate (mu’tedil) and abstinent (perhîzkär) but also an unequalled paper joiner (vaṣṣâlî) and bookbinder (mücellid).

The artist’s name (or perhaps his sobriquet) implies his association with antinomian dervish groups. Besides the reference to his skill as an artist, a verse in ‘Âli’s above-quoted poem, which defines him as a mine of talent (kân-i ma’rifet), could be understood—albeit indirectly—as related to the ability to know God with the heart’s eye on the path to Sufism. The metaphor of the crescent moon as Kalender’s earringed slave, in the second hemistich of the same couplet, brings to mind the earrings worn by dervishes. Furthermore, Mehmed b. Mehmed’s description of Kalender as “abstinent” (perhîzkär), an adjective connoting self-restraint and avoidance of sin and sexuality, suggests Kalender’s preference for celibacy (mücerred). According to Bektashi tradition, celibate dervishes wore heavy, metal earrings in the shape of horseshoes or rings after their ears had been pierced during special ceremonies. These earrings were signs of celibacy in line with certain Bektashi dervishes and clergy, allegedly including Hacı Bektaş and Bûlûm Sultan (d. 1516). Mehmed b. Mehmed’s indication that the young Kalender was a learned/wise bâbâ among the court novices (cîmlenîn ’izâlarında bir bûbây-i âlim) also implies his association with the celibate Bektashi bûbâs, the high-ranking dervishes whose organization was most likely founded after the 1550s. These subtle intimations bring to mind Kalender’s Sufi affiliations. It is still impossible to establish which Sufi order Kalender Pasha may have belonged to, if any, but three factors suggest he may have been a Bektashi: first, the Bektashi order had been recognized to some extent at the Ottoman court, particularly after the sixteenth century; second, within the army, the janissaries had special connections to the Bektashis; and, finally, “Kalender” was commonly used as a name and sobriquet among the Bektashis.

KALENDER’S ALBUMS FOR SULTAN AHMED I

Today we are familiar with Vâssâl Kalender from his close association with the arts of the book—which exceeded that of a mere hobbyist—and from various surviving works of art in his hand. The art of paper joinery consists of attaching pieces of paper to one another so as to mask the individual joints. However, vaṣṣâls also demonstrated their talents by restoring manuscripts and framing pages within a margin (pervaẓ) in order to enlarge them, as well as by designing books. This particular process is especially important in the production of albums, which combine independent calligraphies, paintings, and drawings (qiṭʿa) that differ in content, as well as dimension, style, and technique. Undoubtedly, the traditional principles of the arts of the book guided the artists who produced such album-books. At the same time, the creation of artistic collations that were otherwise unrelated to each other resulted in independent, original works of design. In addition to introducing the artist and his work, the texts that Kalender placed at the beginning of his albums also present clues regarding this process of design.

Three albums that were certainly compiled by Kalender are known today, and some folios with stylistic and distinctive features attributable to him survived in other albums. Kalender composed these albums in almost identical format and style, though each contains diverse content, fulfills distinct purposes, and is the result of different processes of production. These three albums, which have approximately the same dimensions, contain prefaces written in the naskh script that each directly address the contents of their respective volumes.

The motifs and colors of the illuminations at the beginning of all three album prefaces relate to those of a tughra (calligraphic monogram) of Sultan Ahmed I that was signed by Kalender and appears at the beginning of the Fânname (Book of Omens), his final work (fig. 5). The stylistic similarity between the heading illuminations of the prefaces and the tughra suggests that they are all by the same artist. While the overall conception of motifs and colors is almost identical in all of the works, they are designed differently. The gold wash (hâlkârî) decoration in the margins, which at times are
illuminated designs. Most of the motifs are executed in paper-joining technique, which appear almost like colored drawings. Kalender masterfully hides the seams of the attached split-palmettes with gold lines, demonstrating the laudatory comments of Mustafa ʿÂli in his eulogy: “No one could possibly detect the joinings / Even the most visionary eyes would think it a single piece” (figs. 3–6 and 15). His command of geometry (hendese), underlined several times in the preface of his calligraphy album, H. 2171 (see Appendix I for the facsimile, transliteration, and translation), examined below, must have shaped his highly original compositions. These designs are at times arranged at an angle to evoke a layered sense of dimensionality. Kalender made every effort to vary his layouts by paying particular attention...
Fig. 3. Opening page of the calligraphy album. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, H. 2171, fol. 1a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

Fig. 4. Closing page of the calligraphy album. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, H. 2171, fol. 73b. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

Fig. 5. Opening folios of the Fālnāme. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, H. 1703, fols. 1b–2a. (Photos: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)
The first of these albums, all of which are preserved in the Topkapi Palace Museum Library, contains calligraphies that most likely belonged to Kalender’s own collection (H. 2171 [see Appendix I]). In his poem, Mustafa ‘Âli mentions Kalender’s passion for collecting, his peerless holdings of qiṭʿa, and his extravagance in supporting artistic talent. Kalender’s interest can allegedly be traced back to the 1580s, when collecting, particularly samples of calligraphy, was popular among Istanbul’s intellectual elite. Many passages in the Menâkıb-i Hünerverâni demonstrate how these single-sheet calligraphies and paintings were highly esteemed by “men of refinement,” including Sultan Murad III (r. 1574–95), his chief white eunuch, Gazanfer Agha (d. 1603), and his tutor and chief mufti, Hoca Sa’deddin Efendi (d. 1599). The album of calligraphies that Kalender presented as a gift to the sultan contains works by various celebrated calligraphers mentioned by ‘Âli. Among these artists were the Iranian calligraphers Mir ʿAli (d. 1544) and Sultan ʿAli (d. 1520?), whose qiṭʿas, according to the author, were prized among the collectors of Istanbul at the time he completed his work in 1587. In addition, works by Qutb al-Din Muhammad Yazdi and Abdallah Kırımi (d. 1590) specifically indicate Kalender and ‘Âli’s common interest, taste, and knowledge in the art of calligraphy (fig. 7). ‘Âli stresses the importance of these two artists, both for their skills and their erudition in the history of the calligraphic arts, which were of great benefit to him while he was writing his book. Qutb al-Din Muhammad Yazdi was the most important inspiration for ‘Âli; they met in 1585–86, when ‘Âli was the finance secretary in Baghdad. ‘Âli spent many days and nights with him, and, upon his suggestion, Qutb al-Din wrote a treatise on fifty masters of the naskh and nastaʿlīq scripts. ‘Âli apparently owned a copy of this treatise, which he
sometimes quoted and sometimes compared with other sources. It is highly probable that ʿÂli and Kalender had many conversations concerning Qutb al-Din’s merits. Mevlana Abdallah Kırmı, known as Tatar Katib, was one of the salaried scribes at the Ottoman court and also a respected calligrapher, who provided ʿÂli with information on the artists of fine writing.²⁰ In other words, the album’s content sheds light on Kalender’s connoisseurship and collection. It reveals his interest in Timurid, Safavid, and contemporary Ottoman calligraphers, as well as the availability of these works on the Istanbul art market in the late 1500s.

This was probably the first album that Kalender presented to Sultan Ahmed I, as a token of gratitude for his appointment as the financial building supervisor of the sultan’s mosque, under construction at the time. The way he assembled the album demonstrates his connoisseurship and skills, as well as his command of the art of drawing, proportion, and geometry, all prerequisites—as emphasized in the preface—for his new assignment as building supervisor.²¹

The calligraphy album, which measures 48 by 34 centimeters, includes seventy-three folios. It contains chapters and verses from the Koran, samples of hadith and poetry executed in different styles by Ottoman and Iranian calligraphers, and paper decoupage writings by the legendary Ottoman artist Fahri of Bursa (d. ca. 1610). Kalender’s formal and conceptual arrangement openly mirrors his knowledgeable and diligent approach to his work as an album designer. The layout of the pages, clearly inspired by sixteenth-century Safavid examples, is designed in Kalender’s personal style. He encloses the qīṭʿas with his typical frames, which consist of variously colored papers cut into very small squares and rectangles.
and mounted into the frames, at times diagonally. These frames sometimes consist of decorated paper strips (fig. 7). The rather large margins are also in his characteristic manner. In addition to his regular gold wash decorations on brown, maroon, beige, or dusty pink papers, he also uses marble papers to surround the calligraphic samples and pages from manuscripts. Kalender opens and closes his volume with almost identical full-page decorated papers. With their bold, almost psychedelic circles, these illuminated pages affirm Kalender's original contribution to Ottoman design (figs. 3 and 4). The circular medallions consist of thin strips of cut paper, demonstrating his skill in the art of vāsl, which involved cutting and pasting, as well as joining papers.

The first fourteen folios of this album are from the Koran, except for fol. 9a, which features a text on the art of calligraphy. Before the preface (fols. 17b–23b), Kalender inserted three decorated pages as a buffer between the word of God and prosaic introductory text. 22 Starting on folio 24a, facing pages are governed by certain complementary formal principles. Most of the facing pages are designed in relation to one another, with one side including samples of taʿliq or nastaʿlīq script while the other includes naskh or thuluth, thus pointing to a certain visual principle used in designing the bi-folios (fig. 7). This visual rhythm is applied almost throughout the entire manuscript, attesting to Kalender's sensitive and conceptual approach to displaying his collection.

The preface, between folios 17b and 23b, is written in a clear, voweled naskh hand and decorated with gilding between the lines. The text was written by the then-current chief army judge (kazasker) of Rumeli, who, among all the learned class, was valued and distinguished by the sultan. 23 The author does not give his name, but he begins the qaṣīda at the end of the preface with his sobriquet, Kemālī—the penname of the prominent statesman and scholar Taşköprizade Kemaleddin Efendi (d. 1621). As a member of the celebrated Taşköprizade family, the preface's author was educated under distinguished teachers and worked as a professor at some of Istanbul's main madrasas. After holding judgelships in various important cities, he was several times appointed chief judge of Anatolia and in April 1612 (Safar 1021) became chief judge of Rumeli. His first term there ended on October 25, 1612 (29 Shaʿban 1021), and he was subsequently reappointed several times. Apart from composing poetry under the penname Kemālī, he wrote and translated many historical and religious works, including some in Arabic. 24 Based on the years he first held the office of chief judge of Rumeli, the completion of Kalender’s album can be attributed to sometime between April and October 1612.

As Kalender authored the presentation texts of his subsequent works, Album B. 408 and the Fālnāme, his decision to have a reputable statesman and literary figure compose the preface of this first known work—which relates it to another Ottoman literary genre, takriz (a eulogizing preface by an important literary figure for another writer’s book)—suggests Kalender's desire to remain anonymous and have someone else laud him and his work.

The author of the preface recounts that when the artist (Kalender) completed his work, he was asked to compose a foreword (dībāçe) to describe the album and praise the sultan. Allegedly, the author first declined, asserting his inadequacy in the art of poetry and composition and his inability to produce anything worthy of the sultan. 25 Yet Kalender refuted his excuses, reminding him that he had executed several works of prose and poetry for the sultan, most of which he had admired, and that he had bestowed various gifts upon him in return. 26

The preface follows the Timurid and Safavid models, first praising God, the Prophet Muhammad, and ʿAli, and then Sultan Ahmed I. 27 The author then proceeds to relate the story of the album's production, a biography of its compiler, and a summary of the book’s contents. In invoking God, the author refers to Him as the creator of the divine pen that wrote on the Preserved Tablet (Levḥ-i Mahfūz) “all that was and would be” on His order. The creation of the universe is likened to the act of album compiling, using terms from the practice of album making: “[He] joined (vaṣl u ʾilṣāḳ) this subtle page (ṣaḥife-i latife) [i.e., the Preserved Tablet] to the folios and layers of the celestial spheres (evrāk u ʿatbāk-i eflāk). Together with the rays of light from the sun and awe-inspiring colors and ornate design of the stars, this beautiful album (muraḳḳaʿ-ʿi zībā) [i.e., the universe], which fascinates painters and decorators, who are incapable of producing anything like it, was created.” 28
The author’s praise for Muhammad is also peppered with references to the pen, further strengthened with verses from the Koran.20 Then, following the Persian tradition of album prefaces, he mentions ‘Ali as the leader (pişvā) and exemplar (muḵtādā) of all calligraphers, especially in the Kufic script.20 After citing the calligraphers who follow their patron saint ‘Ali in creating fine writings that “delight the eyes of the connosseurs (erbāb-ı maʿārif and merd-i ʿarif) and in inventing new styles,” the author underlines the value of the masters of album compiling (üstādān-ı murakkaʿsāzān) and their contribution to the conservation of art: “album makers save and protect those attractive writings from withering and getting scattered and lost overtime.”31 The preface author implicitly refers to Kalender’s calligraphy album for Sultan Ahmed when he writes: “They gather and join the beautiful qiṭʿas together, arrange (tertiib) and decorate (tezyin) them with designs and paintings in gold wash (nakş ü nigar-ı halkârī), and make them gifts for the royal assemblies (mecālis-i selâtîn) and for the splendor of the library (kütübihâne) of the just sovereign.”32 Then the author turns to the Ottoman sultan, whose royal assembly and library were the destination of the very album for which he was composing a foreword. After a lengthy section devoted to the praise of Sultan Ahmed, both in prose and in verse, he introduces the story of the album, in a historical-narrative style that is largely structured as a series of dialogues: through the communications between the sultan and the chief black eunuch el-Hacc Mustafa Agha, as well as between the artist and the composer of the preface, the album’s inception, intention, and content are described, as are Kalender’s skill and merits.

According to the text, “when it occurred to the sultan of the world to have a heavenly mosque built in a pleasant part of the city,” he summoned el-Hacc Mustafa Agha, stating that “it was necessary to appoint from among the servants of his imperial palace a superintendent for that solid and strong building. According to the sultan’s royal mind, the appointment was most suited to the second treasurer, Kalender Efendi, a trusted man and a man of the arts (şâhib-i ʿemānet ve merd-i āhâr), knowledgeable in matters of construction (ahvâl-i bīnâ) and the science of geometry (ʿilm-i hendese), and aware of every craft (her kârdan āgâh).”33 Mustafa Agha responded that “no one among the sultan’s servants was more suitable for that great duty, for he [Kalender Efendi] was intelligent, perceptive (ṣâhib-i ʿezâva fiṭnât ve ehl-i ʿiyāṣet ve ālārt), and experienced (umâr-dîde ve kâr-āzmûde).” Furthermore, [Kalender] “was skillful in the science of geometry and capable of inventing all sorts of designs, images, and drawings (ʿicâd-ı evâ-ı târîh ve suver u rûsîma kâdîr).” The agha recognized that all those skills qualified Kalender as a perfect paper joiner and album-maker among his colleagues in both the Ottoman lands (Rûm) and Iran (ʿAcem).34 The author uses this laudatory language, voiced through both the sultan and the agha, to offer his own praise for Kalender. He also states how important being knowledgeable in geometry is for the arts of the book and album compiling. Given the Ottoman elite’s appreciation of Persian literature and visual arts, Kemaleddin Mehmed Efendi’s reference to Iranian album making, a popular Timurid and Safavid practice, evokes a common intellectual tradition. However, he compares Kalender to both Iranian and Ottoman (Rûmî) artists, suggesting that the two traditions were equally important.

In the next section, Kemaleddin Mehmed Efendi focuses on the album’s content and on Kalender’s intent. He underlines once again Kalender’s aptitude in geometry and construction, but identifies the sultan’s fondness for fine calligraphy as the main reason for the creation of the work. The ruler also enjoyed “the subtleties of design and depiction and his noble heart was inclined to exquisite books and charming albums.”35 This comment is not a mere tribute to Sultan Ahmed I; in fact, his fondness for perusing the albums in his library is attested by the notes he wrote in two of the Topkapı Palace albums.36 The author continues, remarking that considering the sultan’s inclination, “his abovementioned servant [Kalender] collected innumerable examples of calligraphy by ancient masters and depictions and designs done by painter-designers from Cathay and China, joined them by the art of paper joining (ṣanʿat-i vâssâlî), and created an album in an excellent manner (tarz-ı ʿubâb) and novel style (bedîʿi-ʿil-ʿulûb) to present as a gift to the royal court and to his Majesty.”37 The author defines the completed work as a wondrous album (murakkaʿ-ı ġarîb) of amazing style
and design (üşläb u ṭarḥ-i ʿacīb), thus praising the arts of gathering and joining, which would certainly “bewilder and astound the minds of the masters” (ʿuḳūl-i ʿustādān ʿacīs ʿī hāyṛān olmāt mukarrerdūr). The focus on the informative quality of the album, consisting of the works of renowned calligraphers and painter-designers, points to the importance placed on its didactic function in fostering a certain taste and connoisseurship. In fact, a similar assertion is stressed in the preface written by Kalender himself in his other work, the album of Ahmed I, to be discussed below. In the case of the calligraphy album, the elegance of its decoration and paintings are described as evocative of the image of the beloved (nigār-i maḥbūb), who is “adorned with varyingly embroidered (mīnakkaḵš) garments and is decorated and jeweled (mūzeyyen ʿī muḥallā) with heart-attracting gems (ḥilīy vū cēvāhir-i dīlḵē)” The author once again applauds the art of joining the pages of the album.

After the story of the composition of the preface, which I analyzed above, the text concludes with a qaṣīda and prayers dedicated to Sultan Ahmed.

A COMPILATION OF QĪṬʿĂS FROM THE ROYAL COLLECTION: AHMED I ALBUM, B. 408

Kalender’s next album with a preface is called “The Album of the World Emperor Sultan Ahmed Khan,” as stated in its illuminated heading (see facsimile in Appendix II). At 48 by 35 centimeters, this thirty-two-folio album is almost identical in size to the previous one and retains its original binding. Even though the binding was restored at an unknown time, folios 12 and 25 are damaged, most likely due to the copper content of the green pigment of their margins; they are also detached from the binding and torn along their edges. Another five pages are reattached to the spine with strips of paper (fols. 23, 24, 26, 28, and 31).

Like Album H. 2171, with respect to the overall design of its pages, this work also recalls sixteenth-century Safavid examples. It comprises calligraphic specimens, paintings, and drawings, which, according to its preface, were given to Kalender by the sultan to gather in an album. Both the calligraphies and images are mostly by Ottoman artists, except for a few of Iranian and Central Asian provenance.

The album has only a few examples of calligraphy, including pages from manuscripts. Except for two pages in the beginning, the calligraphy examples consist of Persian couplets with mystical and romantic content, written in the nastaʿlīq script. The first of these is separated from the preface by an illuminated page (fig. 1) and contains the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (fol. 5b). Kalender obviously regarded this page as important since he placed it opposite a page featuring verses from the Koranic chapters al-Aʿraf and al-Baqara, hadith, and a saying of ʿAli (fol. 6a). This seems unusual at first glance, especially in view of its unsophisticated quality. Sultan Ahmed’s signature provides an explanation for this rather unexpected placement. The rest of the calligraphies are scattered among the pages with images, mostly displayed on separate folios. Pieces from certain calligraphers, such as the legendary Timurid/Safavid calligrapher Shah Mahmud Nishaburi (d. 1564), were evidently considered more valuable than others.

The layout of the folio, featuring the opening page from a copy of the Būstān (Orchard) of Saʿdi (d. 1291), is designed in an unprecedented manner, with paper-cut frames and concentric roundels surrounding the text block (fig. 8). In addition, certain Ottoman calligraphies were differentiated by being mounted on elaborately designed folios. For example, Kalender seems to have prioritized the mystical works of Derviş Receb Rumi, who was perhaps also a distinguished friend. All but one of his qīṭʿās are displayed alone and feature two different margins. One qīṭʿ, combining Persian and Arabic hemistiches, is surrounded by an extraordinary frame that displays Kalender’s proficiency in the art of vaṣṭl, this time joining cut sheets of paper with leather (fig. 9). This frame, which is reminiscent of wood inlaid with precious ivory sheets, is unique in the album.

Another work, by Katib al-Sultani Emir Mehmed Emin of Tirmiz, a court scribe, includes a dedication to Kalender: “Written for Kalender Efendi, Long may he live” (bi-jihat-i Kalender Efendi, ṭāla ʿumruhu nivishta shud) (fol. 12b). This note is highly unusual in the calligraphy tradition not only because it addresses a specific owner/patron, Kalender, but also because it
indicates that he contributed at least one work from his own collection to Sultan Ahmed’s album, implying that he himself was one of the artists mentioned in the album preface as having donated artworks to the sultan as gifts.

The album’s images consist primarily of figural studies, portraits of Ottoman sultans, narrative paintings, ink drawings, and unfinished works. Among these, paintings of individual figures are the most numerous. These small-scale images depict various figures from Ottoman society, men and women, young and old, ranging from the palace elite to non-Muslim subjects and from scholars and saints to bathhouse attendants and male dancers (figs. 10–12). Except for a few examples set against a landscape, most of the portraits are drawn on plain paper, with no background to place the figures in a narrative context. Stylistically, they belong to two distinct groups, the first of which is executed with a relatively thick, fast brush by a repetitive artist, whose style is closely related to the manner of professional artists working independently of the court, the so-called bazaar painters. The second group of single-figure portraits seems to be the work of a more accomplished artist or artists, most likely associated with the royal atelier.

These single-figure portraits drew upon the Safavid tradition of album painting, some directly emulating late sixteenth-century Safavid examples, others bearing their influence. One picture, reproduced here, of a kneeling young man (fig. 10, bottom row, middle), for instance, is a reversed variation of a Safavid model. Even though it is not possible to trace back the specific original from which this painting was copied, it is directly
related to an image attributed to Qazvin, circa 1587, which was also copied by Riza-i ‘Abbasi, in 1602–3 or 1603–4. In other words, at least some of these images belong to the visual repertory of the single-sheet paintings in the Safavid album tradition, which was apparently well known and well regarded by Ottoman painters and patrons.

However, another genre well established in the Ottoman painters’ own milieu must have fostered this prevailing taste for single-sheet portraits, namely, the costume book. The latter also consists of autonomous art works, which owe their thematic and contextual coherence to the fact that they satisfied a specific function and were intended for a particular audience.
Starting in the mid-sixteenth century, costume books containing single-leaf portraits of Ottoman individuals, executed by both European and Ottoman painters, began to be made, mostly for a European clientele. The figures included in Ahmed’s album, representing a wide stratum of Ottoman society, link its content to costume albums prepared primarily to introduce the Ottomans to European patrons. The figures in these paintings are depicted with rather generic physiognomies and often repeat certain prototypes, but they may also have portrayed actual individuals known in the city and court, or contemporary personalities popular among Istanbulites. For instance, one image represented in two different copies, pasted on fols. 18b and 27b (fig. 11, below, left), depicts a young man kneeling and holding a book, a fur cap with a feather and an aigrette on his head. Apart from the headgear, no other attribute distinguishes these figures from the others. However, another work depicting the same sitter, which survives in an album now housed in the Chester Beatty Library of Dublin, includes a label that identifies the kneeling youth as Mirzazada of Shirvan, the pupil of Khwaja Hafiz. The Dublin portrait of Mirzazada, probably slightly earlier and depicting him in similar outfits of different colors, was likely used as the model for the young men reading a book in Album B. 408—or all of them were perhaps derived from a common prototype.

Costume albums generally include the portrait of the reigning sultan in the beginning, followed by the grantees of the ruling elite, and the palace eunuchs. Ahmed I’s album also contains two portraits, of Selim I (r. 1512–20) and perhaps Ahmed I (fols. 11a and 27b), by a city painter (fig. 11, top row). Kalender mounted the sultans’ portraits together with two images, one of a privy chamber page and a black eunuch flanking the sultan, and another of a page carrying food. Through the reorganization of separate images, Kalender gave these group portraits a ceremonial content, thus changing their meaning.

Ahmed I’s album also contains narrative paintings. In addition to compositions that repeat certain traditional tropes known from literary and historical manuscripts—such as hunting, camping, and entertainment scenes, as well as literary gatherings—these paintings also depict possibly contemporaneous anecdotes, events, and scenes from Ottoman daily life. Kalender grouped them in line with their stylistic features and thematic content, and generally mounted them together on one page, placing those pages in the volume according to a certain rhythm.

Two other groups of images impart an undisputed Ottoman quality to the album and link it to the visual culture of the court. The first of these consists of six images from a historical book written in Turkish verse (fig. 13). The style of the artist is known from historical manuscripts executed in the last two decades of the sixteenth century by court painters. The text is a copy of a Câm-i Cem-āyín (The World-displaying Cup of Cem), written by Hasan b. Mahmud Bayati in 1481–82. This Turkish genealogy—which according to its author was based on a certain Öğuzname (Book of the Oghuz)—links the Ottomans to the Oghuz clan known as Kayı and, through it, to Adam. The text recounts brief biographies of the Kayı leaders, who are defined in the explanatory headings above the first painting as the ancestors of the House of Osman (Aš-î ʿOsmān ecdādī). The surviving pictures must have come from an uncompleted illustrated copy that was executed at the royal atelier to be integrated into the corpus of illustrated histories of the Ottoman dynasty. In fact, between 1578 and 1580, the court historian Seyyid Lokman Ashuri probably used the Câm-i Cem-āyín for his Hünernāme (Book of Skills), which recounts the various skills and qualities of the Ottoman sultans, as he cites an Öğuzname among his sources.

Another Ottoman court tradition that dominates the Ahmed I Album is the art of sultanic portraiture, represented here by three independent images and a series of the first twelve sultans. One of the three independent single portraits is a partially overpainted Italianate bust of Mehemd II (r. 1444–46; 1451–81), dated to the 1470s (fol. 15b). Another, depicting the young Murad III (r. 1574–95), is attributed to Nakkaş Hasan Pasha, who was a contemporary of Kalender’s (fig. 10, above, left). The serial portraits depict twelve Ottoman sultans from Osman I to Murad III, most of whom are shown holding golden globes (kızıl elma [red apple]), symbolizing Ottoman conquests (fig. 14). Together with the pictures from Câm-i Cem-āyín, these portraits establish the royal/historical context of the album. Instead of
scattering them haphazardly among the other images, Kalender placed the sultans from the series and their ancestors at the beginning and end of the album, thus stressing the continuity of the Ottoman dynasty.

As opposed to the more coherent group of works he assembled together in his calligraphic compilation, the mixed content of Ahmed I’s album must have been a challenging task for Kalender as an album compiler/designer. Using his typically large margins decorated with gold wash and frames made of small papers in differing colors, he managed to impart a visual unity to those mixed pages. In addition, the order of the works, grouped thematically and stylistically, mirrors a certain arrangement, which contributes to the effect of an unbroken narrative.

The portraits of sultans, which taken together depict the House of Osman, serve both to link the album to the Ottoman family and to represent their rule over the lands inhabited by Ottoman subjects depicted in the other images. The volume opens with a gold wash decorative page, designed to echo the composition of the inner cover of the binding (fig. 1). Following the seven-page preface comes another decorative folio, to prepare the viewer to peruse the body of items included. The two pages containing the traditions and Koranic chapters are followed by pages on which the Ottoman dynasty’s ancestors and first four sultans are represented. After forty pages (fols. 8b–28a) composed of images and writings, the volume concludes with the pages containing images of the last eight sultans and their ancestors. These last folios also include decorative pages displaying Kalender’s innovative compositions and skill in the art of vaṣāl (fig. 15). These full-page decorations do not seem to be used as mere separators; rather, they showcase the virtuosity of the artist. In fact, in notes written at the edges of the pages, an unknown connoisseur deemed these all examples of “extraordinary paper joining” (vaṣṣāle-i nādire).

We know the preface to the album was written by Kalender, even though he does not provide his name. In addition to the stylistic characteristics and format of the folios, many references to himself as the compiler of the album make this attribution valid. Here, the laudatory tone of the preface to Album H. 2171 is replaced by one that provides invaluable information about Kal-
mankind through God’s spirit breathed into his body (15:29 and 38:72) and through the honor conferred on him by God (17:70). After praising the Prophet and the four Sunni caliphs, he applauds the sultan, stressing his interest in exquisite speeches (words) and images. Kalender compliments the sultan on his knowledge and expertise, as well as on the beautiful paintings that are housed in his palace and royal pavilions. By referring to the works in the royal residences, Kalender seems to relate the sultan’s wisdom and knowledge to his taste and appreciation for the arts, thereby exalting the arts and their meaning. By extension, he implies that understanding and collecting art requires intellectual refinement.

In the next section, Kalender expands on the concept of art as a reflection of beautiful works that help one to perfect the self and gain peace of mind; the act of gazing upon beautiful things (referring to the works compiled in the album) serves to deepen one’s wisdom and develop one’s learning through example. He further notes that perusing the album will help the sultan face the evils of the world. Kalender uses the mirror as a metaphor for paintings reflecting the beauties of the world and stresses the relationship between the mirror and the beholder, in other words, the act of contemplating a work of art. According to him:

This passage, expressed in the voice of Kalender—who, according to ʿÂli, owned an unparalleled collection of qīṭās upon which he spent a fortune—speaks to his own relationship with art.
After explaining the benefits and value of contemplating art, Kalender turns to the works in the album and the sultan’s involvement in its compilation. The artists—former calligraphers, painters, and illuminators—presented their creations to the sultan either to secure a royal favor or simply as gifts. As an artist himself, Kalender shows his appreciation for the unequaled calligraphies and images produced by these men, who devoted their lives to their creations.

According to Kalender, it was Ahmed I who first conceived of the idea of an album. The sultan, he explains, wished that these qit’as and pages should be gathered in one place, arranged according to their relationship to one another, and thus turned into a perfect illuminated and bound album. Kalender then describes his own involvement in the album’s compilation, glorifies his master, and stresses his intimate relationship with the sultan. Presenting himself as the slave of the sultan, Kalender makes notes of his master, Muhammad Sharif of Baghdad, a distinguished man of his time and a maker of extraordinary paper joinings (vaṣṣāle-i nādire-kār u müte’ayyināt-ı rūzgār). He had long ago taught him how to join qit’as by master calligraphers and folios with depictions to colorful papers, keeping in mind their relation to one another, in order to assemble them into an album. Apparently, Sultan Ahmed’s familiarity with Kalender as a master album compiler, whom he already knew through one or two albums and manuscripts, played a role in the sultan’s selection of the artist for the commission. Among Kalender’s surviving works, the sultan must have had the aforementioned calligraphy album (H. 2171) in mind.

After a lengthy prayer for the sultan, Kalender continues by recounting how he undertook this work and his considerations therein: when the sultan gathered the leaves with images and calligraphies and sent them to Kalender, he set himself to work to the best of his ability on crafts and marvels never before seen or heard of to make the specimens into an album. For the margins and frames of the works, he would either use colorfully decorated papers of various sorts, or he would attach tiny papers in layers of two or three at the edges of each qit’a, as though they were colored striped cloth. These frames, consisting of tiny squares and rectangles, at times attached to each other diagonally, were Kalender’s trademark in his albums and he defines them as one of the novel and never before seen crafts referred to earlier. He was proud enough of his skill in the art of paper joinery to state that only attentive connoisseurs could see these joinings: “It is not unknown or hidden (ḥafī vü pūşide) to those with acute perception and sagacious people of insight (ḥurdebīnān u hurdedān ehl-i ʿirfān) that by looking at each one of them with a scrutinizing gaze, if attention is paid, (imʿān-i naẓarla iltifāt müteʿalliḳ olsa), God willing, the four corners and the facing one are all in harmony with and conforming to each other, be it in color or in size and length and width.” He thus reveals his aesthetic and technical considerations in attaching the papers together. After beseeching the sultan not to desist in his patronage, Kalender then provides further information on his career, showcasing once again the sultan’s involvement. He informs us that he is old and has spent all his energy working with finesse and care (bu deñlü dikkat ü ihtimām) throughout the years. He further explains that until the present he had studied with many men of dignity and knowledge, and acquired skill and knowledge through his association and affiliation with such learned and experienced masters. He expresses his hope that this skill and knowledge will not have been acquired in vain, thanks to the patronage of the sultan. He gives thanks to God and to the Prophet and prays that these skillful works, whether detached or bound (şikeste vü beste olan taṣannuʿāt), occasionally enjoyed by the sultan whenever he cast his peerless gaze upon them, might be acceptable and pleasing in his noble presence, and that, in accordance with his felicitous order, all of them were arranged in their proper place and completed. The preface closes with praises to the sultan.

A Compilation of Pictures for Divination: The Fālnāme of Sultan Ahmed

Kalender’s last known work is a Fālnāme (Book of Omens). Larger in size than the others (68.3 cm x 47.5 cm), it also differs from his other works in its contents. Since Kalender refers to himself as a vizier in the preface, the Fālnāme must have been completed between
1614 and 1616. *Fālnāmas* are album-books that contain pictorial auguries with accompanying divinatory texts. Based on physical and contextual links between word and image, these works occupy a distinct place in the tradition of illustrated Islamic manuscripts. The narratives of *Fālnāmas* are not continuous wholes. An image is placed on the verso of a page while the corresponding divination text appears on the recto of the following one. Omen seekers with a particular question could thus open the volume to a random page and encounter both an image and a text. In all likelihood, they would first focus on the most striking element, namely, the image on the right-hand page. Turning to the left-hand side, they would see a poem inspired by the image and the divination text, which is where they would read what the future held regarding the issue at hand. In this way, one may think of the combination of image and text as a unified narrative, or of the entire book as an album made up of such pairs. Based on the nature of the content, one could argue that the *Fālnāme* stands closer to albums than to illustrated manuscripts, and shows a typological affinity to Kalender’s other works. Most likely inspired by Persian *Fālnāmas*, one of which is still in the Topkapi Palace Museum Library, Kalender Pasha gathered the large pictorial auguries from various sources, coupled them with the prognostication texts in Turkish, and enlarged all the leaves with decorated margins in his typical style. He thus transformed the separate folios into an integrated whole that resembles his other albums and presented it to Sultan Ahmed. Not commissioned by the sultan, the *Fālnāme* may have been a token of Kalender’s gratitude for his appointment to the Imperial Divan as a vizier in 1614.

The images, depicting defining moments from the lives of the Prophet Muhammad, his descendants, Abrahamic prophets, sages, heroes, and villains, as well as astrological and eschatological themes, belong to a broader repertory of pictorial auguries that are found in Persian *Fālnāma* manuscripts. The deeds of the prophets and other personages, as well as their responses, highlight their faithful and patient approach to unfortunate events and serve, as emphasized in Kalender’s preface, as models for augury seekers in overcoming their own challenges. In other words, the acts of the protagonists in the images are meant to inspire the seeker to develop the eye that learns by example (*ʿayn-i ibret*); this was a metaphor used by Kalender in his discussions on the benefits of art in his previous preface to Album B 408.

Unfortunately, Kalender informs us of neither the sources of the images nor the author of the augury texts. A passage from Evliya Çelebi’s account of the parade held in 1638–39 (1048) for the Baghdad campaign of Sultan Murad IV (r. 1623–40) describes an aged fortune-teller, Mehmed Çelebi, the only representative of the guild of diviners who used images (*fālcıyān-i muṣavvir*). According to Evliya, Mehmed’s profession was to recite poetry evoked by the images chosen by his customers in order to provide their omens. Evliya also mentions that the diviner Mehmed was so old that he had practiced his profession even at an audience before Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520–66). This information prompts us to suggest that the augury pictures had been in circulation in Istanbul at least between approximately 1560 and 1630, and that Kalender could have acquired his images in the city. The paintings are the work of different artists who were not directly associated with the metropolitan styles of Safavid or Ottoman painting of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. However, the first two images of the *Fālnāme* are Ottoman, attributable to Nakşî Bey and Nakkaş Hasan Pasha. Nakşî Bey, of whom we know nothing other than his name and his distinctive style of painting, was probably a member of the palace elite. His painting, to which I shall return shortly, depicts the Persian poet Sa’di disguised as a Chinese monk visiting a temple. The second painting, which features the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, reflects the style of another artist-cum-statesman, the aforementioned Nakkaş Hasan Pasha. These artists, active between about 1580 and 1620, contributed significantly to Ottoman court painting, both in terms of style and iconography. Sharing the same milieu, these contemporaries of Kalender were most likely close acquaintances of his, who provided their works as contributions to his volume.

Kalender Pasha thus brought together images that he had probably gathered from various sources with the augury texts, which were contextually and formally related to earlier Persian examples. With the layout of the pages conceived as bi-folios, and the overall arrange-
moment of the volume constructed on rhythmic repetition, the volume recalls the consistent style of his other works. As in those, here he inserts the pages containing images and text within margins dyed brown, pink, dusty rose, or green and illuminated with gold wash. He surrounds the text block with margins within margins, the inner ones decorated on beige paper, the outer ones colored to match those surrounding the images. The first page features an illuminated tughra of the sultan signed by Kalender, and is followed by three decorative pages with his typical large ḥatā‘ī and split-palmette compositions, creating a repertoire of designs and motifs in the paper-joining technique (fig. 5). Once again, to complete the volume, Kalender inserts a decorative page that echoes those in the beginning, thus turning the autonomous pairs of pages into one integrated ensemble. Although this volume differs from the others, its preface directly relates to its contents, as is the case in his other works.

The illuminated heading identifies the volume as the Book of Omens of Sultan Ahmed and reconfirms its royal ownership, already suggested by the tughra on the first page. Like his preface to Album B. 408, his introduction to the Fālnāme, which begins by praising God, also stresses the creation of humankind: “God created the human as the most brilliant and noble creature to the Earth with His light to a fortunate prophecy. He then notes that “the world resembles, in its meaning, a book in which the conditions of all nations are written line by line. Both fears and desires may be found in this book, on whose leaves are depicted the morning and the night. Hence, if an augury is taken [using the book], the image of the beginning and the end can be seen.”

With all these references to an illustrated book, Kalender must be implying that his work, which teaches the world a lesson through images, takes its inspiration from the work of God, or that it is a reflection of it. Indeed, the images of the Fālnāme contain instructive scenes depicting the condition of many nations; some show fear, others warnings, and all seem to reverberate with the desires and apprehensions of those who consult the Fālnāme.

Kalender Pasha then offers his praise and prayers to the Prophet Muhammad and notes that the Prophet took the people to the path of Islam and faith by breaking down the idols of misbelief and sin in the temples of Mecca (Baṭḥā) and Medina (Yegrib). It therefore cannot be a mere coincidence that after a few folios the first painting of the Fālnāme (in other words, the opening picture), which is attributed to Nakşî, refers visually to a similar idea (fig. 16). The painting represents the Persian poet Sa’di, disguised as a Chinese monk, looking at an idol. The augury on the opposite page tells a story taken from Sa’di’s Būstān, abridged and altered to a certain extent in order to conform with the image. The story alludes, quite directly, to the false power of idols. During his travels, Sa’di comes upon a Chinese temple, where he encounters an idol that raises its hand when people rub their faces on its foot. After hiding and observing it from a distance, he discovers how the statue moves and exposes the ruse. The reference in the preface of the Fālnāme to the Prophet Muhammad’s smashing of the statues of the Arab gods, along with the depiction of a very similar subject in the first painting of the work, once again demonstrates that Kalender conceived of his presentation texts and paintings as a unit; this also points to his conscious attempt to preempt accusations of idolatry.

Kalender Pasha’s preoccupation with this matter must have been related to Ahmed I’s proclivities and piety, as well as to contemporary events. In the
from that light. Every one of the images of the conditions of the prophets who precede him is a leaf from his maturity.”93 Here, most likely referring to his own work, Kalender continues his poem by saying that “in presenting these images from the lives of the previous prophets, his intention is to reach the Prophet, and to pray for and thank him, his children, his companions, and other holy figures.”94 In other words, Kalender cautiously stresses the function of his images as intermediaries leading the believer to the Prophet, rather than replicating his image, which is not even visible behind the holy light.

Kalender then explains his intention in composing and presenting the Fālnâme:

[Since] ancient times, men of spiritual knowledge and companions of taste and conscience, upon stepping into the world, contemplated the situation of the world with the eye
Kalender concludes this section with a couplet advising the omen seekers to learn from past events in order to increase their own reputation and honor: “if you wish your power and glory to increase, let your gaze always be upon past events.” In this passage, Kalender emphasizes the didactic power of images in helping viewers to learn by analogy and guiding them to act properly to achieve their desires, rather than revealing information regarding the future. He also places the tradition of taking omens from pages with word and image in historical context, and, by attributing the practice to past rulers, showcases its longevity and endurance.

Kalender continues, explaining why he presented his royal gift and when and how the sultan seeks an omen using the Fālnāme:

This is why this slave, Kalender, the sultan’s humble, most insignificant slave, who has been immersed in freedom and benevolence among respected viziers, collected, composed, arranged, and adorned those above-mentioned illustrated pages and leaves, and presented this album as a gift to his imperial seat so that whenever he has a royal wish, or whenever he wants to take an omen, he can seek his augury after reciting the Fatiha (the first chapter of the Koran) once, the Ikhlas (Koran 112) three times, and invoking noble blessings (ṣalāvat-i šerīf) [on the Prophet] three times. [Kalender hopes that] when he opens [the volume] in accordance with the above-mentioned manner, the images of the prophets and saints written on the auspicious right-hand side page (ṣahife-i yümnsinde) of whichever illustrated and ruled bi-folio his invaluable exalted gaze comes to rest will produce abundant inspirations and blessings to his noble nature, and that his augury will be agreeable to his royal wish, decision, and consultation.

Kalender completes his preface with a verse prayer to the sultan, wishing him an auspicious omen. He describes the heavens as consisting of pages (ṣaḥīfe-i felek) on which the Sun draws a line (cedvel) on the horizon with the ground vermillion of dawn every morning, and thereby transforms the celestial spheres into a book. He thus draws a parallel between his own book and the description of nature. Similarly, in wishing for the entire world to transform itself into a book and for the sultan of the world’s fortune to be auspicious in it, he may be implying that his own book encapsulates the world.
Fig. 17. Two pages from a calligraphy album. Topkapı Museum Palace Library, B. 409, fols. 13b–14a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

Fig. 18. Two pages from a calligraphy album. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, B. 409, fols. 40b–41a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)
volume at a later time. Certainly this album might have been compiled during the reign of Osman, since, in contrast with the frames including small pieces of paper, neither the marginal decorations nor the plain frames of paper strips surrounding the specimens were created by Kalender exclusively. However, it is tempting to speculate that Kalender initially produced this album as a gift for the aforementioned el-Hacc Mustafa Agha, the powerful chief black eunuch during the reigns of Ahmed I and Osman II. Since Mustafa Agha was one of Kalender’s strongest supporters and played a key role in his appointment as the building supervisor of the sultan’s mosque, Kalender, to thank him, may have presented him with a calligraphy album whose content and design were similar to the one he had assembled and presented to the sultan for the very same reason (i.e., H. 2171). With many works by the same calligraphers featured in the album assembled for Ahmed I, the proposed Mustafa Agha compilation represents a more modest version of the former: the borders, which in Ahmed I’s album are composed of small pieces of papers, are replaced here with strips, which are either plain, gold sprinkled, or colored and decorated in gold wash; these were attached to each other through the craft of vaṣl. In 1618, when Osman acceded to the throne, Mustafa Agha might have in turn offered it to Osman II, with a dedicatory inscription and qaṣīda, and a number of new folios.

Mustafa Agha was an active member of the palace faction that, only three months after the death of Ahmed I, dethroned his brother Mustafa I in favor of Osman II. As an important courtier, Mustafa Agha presented other illustrated manuscripts to Osman, such as a Turkish version of Firdawsi’s Shāhnāma, translated or rewritten by the court storyteller Medḥi (d. after 1620). The agha’s patronage in the translation and illustration of the text is documented in Medḥi’s preface to the Turkish Shāhnāma, as well as in the frontispiece painting, which depicts him presenting the book to the sultan. The illustrations of the manuscript are attributable to Nakṣi, who also contributed a painting to the Fālnāme, thus indicating the agha’s continuing association with an artistic milieu that also included Kalender.

The second compilation with folios most probably designed by Kalender is in New York, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (67.266.7). Generally known as the Bellini Album, it measures 46 by 34 centimeters, and includes Ottoman, Persian, and European calligraphies and images. The folios belong to a larger compilation that the Swedish collector and dealer Fredrik R. Martin purchased in Istanbul at the turn of the twentieth century. In his 1912 publication, Martin maintained that the album included a painting of a Turkish prince by Gentile Bellini, to which it owes its name. He noted that he had purchased the “Bellini Album,” which was a larger collection in its original form and included “a large number of uninteresting European engravings,” from the son of an Ottoman dignitary. Martin attributed the album to about 1600 and believed it was made for Ahmed I, which seems accurate on the basis of some of the folios in the Metropolitan Museum album. The former Ottoman owner may have informed Martin of the album’s date, which in turn suggests that Kalender’s designs for Ahmed I may have still been recognizable to Ottoman connoisseurs. Five folios feature Kalender’s large margins with gold wash decoration and borders around the qit’as made of small pieces of multicolored papers. Their stylistic affinity to examples in two of Kalender’s other albums (H. 2171 and B. 408) allows us to attribute some of the Metropolitan Museum folios to him. The majority of these folios include Dutch, Italian, French, and Polish engravings depicting devotional and mythological scenes. One, set in borders decorated with small squares and diagonally placed rectangles of paper, is dedicated to Andrea di Prochnik (fig. 19). Jan Andrzej Próchniki was the Bishop of Kamieniec (1607–14) and Archbishop of Lwów (1614–33). The inscription identifying him as Episcopo Camanecen confirms an attribution to the first decade of the seventeenth century, and thus to the reign of Sultan Ahmed I.

Another folio features full-page decorations composed of cut papers joined according to the vaṣl technique on both the recto and verso sides. In their style and technique, these compositions recall Kalender’s decorative pages, in particular the ones he used in the Fālnāme (figs. 6 and 5). The high quality of these six pages suggests that they were designed by Kalender for Ahmed I, and the prints could have belonged to the sultan’s collection. Since the binding of Ahmed I’s album was restored at an unknown time, these folios may even have been extracted from B. 408, and as a group of European works, they may have been offered for sale to an
His prolific artistic accomplishments went beyond that of a pastime of a talented official at the Ottoman court. As recorded by Mustafa ’Âli, Kalender’s fame as a vaṣṣal can be traced back at least to the last decade of the sixteenth century. His skills also earned him the favor and patronage of Sultan Ahmed, who was known for his own interest in albums. Their common passion for the arts of the book must have allowed the sultan and Kalender to forge a strong bond, which in turn resulted in the production of three innovative albums by the artist.

The numerous Timurid, Turkmen, Safavid, and Ottoman albums in the royal collection demonstrate the Ottoman enthusiasm for this genre. Beginning with the earliest examples, albums compiled for the court include works of different provenance. The preponderance of calligraphies, drawings, and paintings of Safavid provenance in these albums shows that Ottoman patrons embraced and recognized these works as part of a shared artistic taste. Kalender’s three albums also suggest an appreciation of Safavid works, which must have served him as a source of inspiration. In his capacity as a distinguished and enthusiastic courtier, Kalender probably had ready access to the royal collection of Safavid albums. His innovative style and technique in decorating the works he compiled, however, lent them a distinct Ottoman quality, transforming them into original interpretations of an established artistic tradition.

Not only did Timurid and Safavid inspirations shape Kalender’s visual vocabulary, but his texts also drew upon Persian prefaces. The album prefaces, as well as the text of the Fālnāme, however, differ from their Persian counterparts both in language and content. Kalender’s albums with prefaces are also highly unusual within the Ottoman tradition. Except for one, which is an identical copy of a Persian preface originally written in 1494, there exists, to my knowledge, no other Ottoman album with a preface.107 Kalender’s keenness for including prefaces in all his works must have been related to his personal artistic and theoretical approach to the arts. This attitude is echoed in the contents of the prefaces, as each one highlights a different aspect of the art of the book and the art of collecting.

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APPENDIX I: PREFACE TO THE CALLIGRAPHY ALBUM, H. 2171, FOLS. 17B–23B, TOPKAPI PALACE MUSEUM LIBRARY

A. Facsimile of H. 2171, fols. 17b–23b

(Photos: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)
Calligraphy Album, H. 2171, fol. 18a.
Calligraphy Album, H. 2171, fol. 18b.
Calligraphy Album, H. 2171, fol. 19a.
Calligraphy Album, H. 2171, fol. 19b.
Calligraphy Album, H. 2171, fol. 20a.
Calligraphy Album, H. 2171, fol. 20b.
Calligraphy Album, H. 2171, fol. 21a.
Calligraphy Album, H. 2171, fol. 21b.
Calligraphy Album, H. 2171, fol. 22a.
Calligraphy Album, H. 2171, fol. 22b.
Calligraphy Album, H. 2171, fol. 23a.
Calligraphy Album, H. 2171, fol. 23b.
APPENDIX I

B. Transliteration of the Preface to the Calligraphy Album, H. 2171 (fols. 17b–23b), by Wheeler M. Thackston


Harçî büdust u hast u ḥwâhad büd ‘satb farkûma dar şâhîf-u câd


Li-münštî’l-fâkîr:

Haşıl oladan bu gûmed-i devvâr * geçet eder kâhînîtî leyl ü nehr.
Gözlerini açıp nûcûm-1 semâ * şarq u garbi olupdurur seyyar.
Görümedi buçe bir şêh-i ’âdîl * kim ide sayaesinde haşk kârár.
Kân her dem ‘ibâdet ü ta’tâ * fikri dâ’îm nîzâm-1 mâlâ ü düyâr.
Devlet ü dini eyledi tecdid * oldî ma’âmûr cûmûle-i âkîr.
Marağ-1 zulûm ile mîzâc-1 cîhân * haste olup ideren âhla zâr.
Anî def’ ettî ol şêh-1 ’âdîl * şerbet-i ’âdîl ile idüp tîmâr.
Cûmle şâhân olup aña bende * küli olmağa ettîler ikâr.
Verdi aña haçr şâh-1 ‘acem * oldî kemter ‘ûlâm hân-1 tâtar.
Bûyle kuvvet bu denîlî vejket ü câh * nice deh oldî gûmedî ehsâr.
Cûmleñûn bâsi’i’da’âlettîr * kim o şeî an eyledi izhâr.
Bûyle şûhü ładû ide bâkî * ola ba’tu gösüde vü bidar.

[20b]

muşanna’u ĩ hôbdur ve leţafet-i nakş u nigârına bakılsa güyâ envâ’-i libâs-i mûnakkaş ve ḵilye vuye cevâhîr-i dilkeş ile müzeýyen ü muhâllâ bir nigâr-i mahbûbdur şan’at-ı vaşşâlsî bir kârdur ki nezâre muhâyyer-eftâr olup her görenler (beyt)

Boyle tarhu nice fikr idüp getûrdi yâdina * şad hezârân âferin ol şan’atustu üstâdana.


Li-munşîhi l’sâhid
Ey Kemâli, ãu nesr-ı dibâce * av-n-ı .rawQuery olup biytârîm âferin aldım peyân.
Innumerable praises and unlimited thanks are appropriate for that possessor of existence through whose exalted and eternal will the universe and all peoples were brought into being, especially the best of the children of Adam, by first creating the pen in accordance with the dictum, “The first thing God created was the pen,” and by placing therein “all that was and would be.” According to the line,

*All that has been and is and will be was recorded on the page of goodness,*

by divine command it wrote on the page of the Preserved Tablet, and by joining that subtle page to the folios and layers of the celestial spheres, with rays of light from the world-illuminating sun, [such] a beautiful album and pleasure-increasing book, adorned with such strange colors and amazing designs of stars, came into being [18a] that the minds of this world’s painter-designers are dumbfounded in comprehending its design and myriads of Manis and Bihzads are stymied in depicting its like.

Praise be given to him who is the final goal of the existence of the universe, the beloved of God, namely the Chosen One, His Highness Mustafa (i.e., the Prophet Muhammad) who, when divine inspiration and inimitable scripture descended from heaven, to his heart came the words, “Recite, for your Lord is the most generous, who taught by the pen, taught mankind what he knew not,” and the instrument of acquisition of knowledge for the learned, who are the most noble of all nations of human beings in accordance with the words, “Are they who know equal to them who know not?” is clearly the pen. So also may the best of his house and companions, followers, and devotees share in those prayers, for the pens of the learned are aided by the ink of their endeavors [18b] and their beneficial decisions and commands go to all parts of the world. God’s contentment be with them all.

It is established by people of reason and knowledge, who are assessors of gems and jewels of learning, and by people of understanding and insight, who are copiers of books and treatises of erudition, and it is engraved and written on pages of sound minds that, with regard to the pen, the fact that the Lord of all worlds has sworn “by the pen and what they write” is true evidence and proof of the greatness and loftiness of the status of the pen. Therefore, the rank of the instrument of writing being at this level, it is clear at what exalted level writing itself is, especially since the chief of all writers of the prophetic excellency and cousin, he who stood at the station of *li maʿa ʾllah,* i.e., His Excellency ‘Ali, saint and treasury of the city of every knowledge visible and invisible (may God ennoble his countenance), the foremost of all the calligraphers of the world and leader of all scribes in establishing the Kufic script, [19a] by saying, “Have good writing, for it is among the keys of sustenance,” indicated that beautiful writing was esteemed and desirable among the people of the world and that it was the key to livelihood and a cause for obtaining all sorts of good things, and he encouraged its acquisition. In fact, because they have described beautiful writing as “When writing is devoid of the gray hair of beauty / The paper gains from it only the blackness of shame,” past masters and calligraphers have created various scripts and invented beautiful and harmonious forms for the shapes of letters, and, just like the forms of human beings, there is a special beauty and glory in each of them, which delights the eye of connoisseurs who gaze at them, and induces joy in the minds of experts who contemplate them. Therefore, in order to protect and guard graceful pages and exquisite writings produced by masters of the world of calligraphy from the maelstrom of the vicissitudes of time, lest they wither like autumn leaves and become scattered and lost with the succession of days and nights and the passage of days, [19b] some masters of album-making hunted down those beautiful examples, every one of
which was like a beloved youth sprouting down, assembled them, joined them together, made them like assemblies in paradise above by arranging and adorning them with designs and gold wash, and made them gifts for the assemblies of rulers to give splendor to the library of the just sovereign. Thanks be to God, the current ruler of the inhabited quarter of the globe and king of kings of all those who dwell beneath the celestial sphere, he who carries out the command, “God commands justice and beneficence,” by giving assistance to the learned and pious and to the poor and weak, is the mighty sultan who shares a name with His Highness Ahmed (i.e., the Prophet Muhammad) the Chosen, king as puissant as Alexander, emperor as magnificent as Feridun, the Shadow of God on earth, possessor of the climes of the dusty expanse in all its length and breadth, the pride of the dynasty of the family of Osman, the Sultan, son of the Sultan, Sultan Ahmed Khan, son of the Sultan Ghazi who fought in battles and raids, Mehmed Khan, son of Sultan Murad Khan, son of Sultan Selim Khan, son of Sultan Süleyman Khan (may God assist the days of his all-conquering fortune [20a] and illuminate the world with the suns of his flourishing rule as long as the celestial spheres spin and the eyes of the stars in the sky are awake at night). By the humble composer:

Ever since this spinning dome was created, it has traversed the universe day and night. / The stars in the sky open their eyes and move east and west. / They have not seen such a just king in whose shadow people rest. / Every moment his labor is worship and obedience; his thought is always to maintain order in his realm. / The state and religion he has renewed; all realms have become flourishing. / The constitution of the world having become ill with the disease of tyranny, the people cried out. / That just king has repulsed it and treated the world with the potion of justice. / All kings have become slaves to him and have confessed their servitude. / The king of Iran has given tribute to him; the khan of the [Crimean] Tatars has become his most humble servant. / Such might, magnificence, and glory for many ages the eyes have not seen. / The cause of it all is the justice that the king made manifest. / May God make such a king everlasting; may his fortune be vast and awake. [20b]

Since that just king and peerless sovereign was inclined to observe Friday prayers in congregation and to perform religious observances and charitable acts, he determined to begin and soon complete in a delightful spot in the city the building of a paradisiacal mosque, contemplating the beautiful and novel architectural style of which astonishes the minds of the world's architects and the admired design of which the world's engineers are unable to picture and depict. And it was as if the magnificent king had been divinely inspired by the pleasing representation of a lofty palace in paradise that became reflected in the mirror of his imagination. It was built in accordance with that design and novel style. When this perception manifested itself in the mind of the king of the world, he issued an order to his servant—a possessor of piercing intelligence, an assayer of mental gems among critics, he who was acceptable at the royal court and treasurer of the secrets of world rule, trusted servant of the Exalted State and loyal believer in his Glorious Majesty, by whom I mean the Agha of the Imperial Harem, el-Hacc Mustafa Agha (may the Lord cause him to attain in the shadow of the sultan's felicity whatever He wills). According to this order that must be obeyed, it was necessary to have a trusted overseer for that strong and solid building from among servants of the imperial threshold. It occurred to the royal mind that the task should be turned over to the Finance Officer of the Second Financial Division, Kalender Efendi, a trusted man and a man of the arts, who was an expert in the matters of construction and in the science of geometry and aware of every craft. The glorious Agha, intuiting what was in the ruler’s mind, said, "My sovereign, it is certain that no one is more suitable for that great service among Your Majesty’s servants because he is intelligent and perceptive and, as well as being experienced, is an expert in the science of geometry and capable of inventing all sorts of designs, images, and drawings, [21b] and his equal is rare. It is for that very reason that he is firmly established among the masters of the Ottoman lands and of Iran as peerless in the arts of paper joining and making albums.” Since that just monarch was much inclined to the art of beautiful writing and cognizant of the subtleties of design and depiction, and his noble heart was inclined to exquisite books and charming albums, his abovementioned servant collected innumerable examples of calligraphy by ancient masters and designs and pictures by painter-designers from Cathay and China, joined them by
the art of paper joining and created an album in an excellent manner and novel style to present as a gift for the royal court and to His Majesty, so as to show His Highness his expertise in the science of geometry and his skill in building. Having set forth on that labor and hastening to complete it, thanks to Him, it has now been finished, and truly it is such a wondrous album that the arts of gathering and joining manifested in it will surely bewilder the minds of the masters. [22a]

In sum, it is a book worthy of being presented to that majestic sovereign, endowed with a refined and pure heart, and is in conformity with his critical nature. It has become a beautiful book of praiseworthy style such that if one gazes at the canonical rules embodied in its calligraphies, it furnishes information on the artistry of past masters, as a book of artifice and beauty. And if one gazes at the subtlety of its designs and pictures, it is as if it were a beloved who is adorned with variously embroidered garments and is decorated and jeweled with heart-attracting gems. The art of joining exhibited therein is a work that astonishes the eye, and everyone who sees it says, "How did he bring to his mind such a design; a hundred thousand praises for the master of that art," and heaps upon it thousands of bravos. When his aforementioned servant set about completing that task and exhibiting his expertise in that art, he charged this humble servant with composing a foreword and praise of the album and the sovereign for whom it was created, but I expressed my apologies and inability, pleading my pedestrian attempts in the arts of poetry and composition [22b] and saying that I was incapable of producing anything worthy of the sovereign, but he replied that my excuses were unacceptable, saying, “Prior to now you have produced several scattered specimens of poetry and prose for the exalted monarch and most of them were esteemed by the sultan, and in return for them you received various gifts. Your faults and skills are known to His Majesty and, despite your flaws, you have been found acceptable to the monarch.” He convinced me by saying, “You, a poor old man, have been rewarded and honored with the position of chief judge of the troops of Rumelia and distinguished among all the learned. In thanks for such generosity you should hasten to undertake and complete it.” Relying on the Lord of humanity, I undertook the task, and with his assistance it was completed. It is hoped that any mistakes and shortcoming enveloped within it may be pardoned by the sovereign. In accordance with the dictum, “Every flaw the sultan approves is a virtue,” may that generous sovereign reckon its flaws as skills. [23a]

By the poor composer:

O Kemali, since the prose of the foreword has, with God's help, come to an end, / Now try to versify a necklace of pearls of prayer for the sultan. / As the beginning was praise of God, let the end be praise of the sovereign. / I have recounted his praiseworthy qualities and beneficence insofar as was possible. / This is the summary of it all, that in the world that lord of the world has no equal. / That king has become in this dynasty the glory of the Ottoman progeny. / He has revived the body of the world: now he is the soul of the universe. / The nobles of Mecca and the khan of Crimea are proud to be his slaves. / The moment a king places his head on his threshold, his head rises far above Saturn. / O God, protect that generous king from all calamities. / Let that king of the age live as long as Noah with good fortune. / Make firm that pillar of Islam for as long as the pillars of the world remain firm. [23b]

So long as breezes of divine breaths and wafts of infinite miracles blow from the other world and dawning rays of eternal favor break from the supernal realm, may the majestic sovereign’s ascendant stars of good fortune twinkle and shine from the horizon of godly assistance and may the lights of glory and magnificence glow from the sanctuary of heavenly favor, and may the felicity of his excellent qualities cause him to occupy the throne of majesty and world rule, and may the dust of the gate to his exalted threshold be the resort of mighty rulers, and may his glorious threshold be ever the refuge of renowned emperors. Amen, through the sanctity of the Lord of Apostles, Muhammad the Chosen (may God pray for him and give him peace).

Since he has sat upon the throne in fortune, enemies have despaired of comfort. / Since his shadow of justice has been extended, the gate of tribulation has been shut. / Drops from the cloud of his beneficence have given new life to the garden of the soul. / May the life and prosperity of the king of religion be eternal until the day of resurrection. Amen.
APPENDIX II: PREFACE TO THE AHMED I ALBUM, B. 408, FOLS. 1B–4B, TOPKAPI PALACE MUSEUM LIBRARY

A. Facsimile of B. 408, fols. 1b–4b

(Photos: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)
Ahmed I Album, B. 408, fol. 2a.
Ahmed I Album, B. 408, fol. 3a.
Ahmed I Album, B. 408, fol. 3b.
Ahmed I Album, B. 408, fol. 4a.
APPENDIX II

B. Transliteration of the Preface to the Ahmed I Album, B. 408 (fols. 1b–4b), by Wheeler M. Thackston

Murakka’-ı Padişah-ı Cihân Sultan Ahmed Han

(Ḥallada 'ählau mulkahu wa-abbada saţṭanatuha ilâ yawmi 'l-ḥaṣri wa'l-mizân. Āmîn.)


Sulţânûl-ʻüzâtîl-mücăhidîn, kahramânûl-ʻuṣât ve l'-mu'ânidîn, mefâbirîl-'aşr ve l'-zâmân-ı, ma'ânidîl-ı-'adîl ve l'-amân, ħalifetîl-'devrân, şâḫibûl-.ylabel ve l'-ižân, nâsîrîl-ın'âm ve l'îhâsan, gûzîde-ı ehl-ı imân ve zûbî-ı ál-î 'Oşmân, el-mâḫûs bi-ʻavni 'inâyetîl-mlêkîl-


APPENDIX II

C. Translation of the Preface to the Ahmed I Album, B. 408 (fols. 1b–4b), by Wheeler M. Thackston

Album of the World Emperor Sultan Ahmed Khan

(May God perpetuate his kingdom until doomsday. Amen)

Limitless and unending praise and untold thanks are fitting for the Lord of Lords, the causer of all causes who is the originator of strange marvels and inventor of amazing crafts, who created this blue dome, the wheel of heaven, and the world and everything that is in it for the sake of His Prophetic Excellency, the pride of this world and the next who was dignified by the words, “Were it not for you, were it not for you, I would not have created the celestial spheres,” in order to show his total power and all-encompassing will to those things fashioned by his might and those things brought into existence in the space of beneficence. Having based the creation and nature of all things on his power and wisdom, and having mixed together water, earth, fire, and air, with his own puissant hand he kneaded and fashioned the four elements, addressed them, saying, “I breathed into him of my spirit,” and brought onto the page of existence the original human, the most ancient prophet, he of blessed footsteps, the pure [2a] father of humankind, Adam (may God pray for him and give him peace), from the hidden recesses of nonexistence, and then he ennobled him with the words, “We ennobled the sons of Adam.”

Praise be to God alone, and then may there be limitless prayers and greetings for him whose name stands at the head of the register of prophecy, the last name in the ode to apostlehood, the sun in the heaven of chivalry and legislation of the religion of the nation, the shining lamp of the community, he who is the seal of the prophet and apostles, the broadcaster of the word of truth and religion, the intercessor on behalf of sinners, a mercy to all worlds, leader of the people of hope, the guide in whom the best of people take refuge, beloved of the Almighty, i.e., Muhammad the Chosen (peace be upon him). And unending greetings be upon the venerable Four Friends, upon his family, and upon his noble companions, who have undertaken completely and concentrated their attention beyond doubt on performing the obligatory five prayers and implementing the glorious tradition. May God be pleased with them all.

Sultan of religious warriors, conqueror of rebels and opponents, pride of the age and time, mine of justice and peace, caliph of the age, puissant and mighty one, spreader of beneficence and charity, chosen one from the people of faith, best of the Ottoman family, he who has been singled out for divine favor, the sultan, son of the sultan, Sultan Ahmed Khan, [2b] son of Sultan Mehmed Khan, son of Murad Khan (may God assist his kingdom, state, and rule until the promised day of the balance), he whose gate is felicitous, whose existence is rare, around whose throne happiness revolves, whose lofty threshold is the abode of justice, a king of kings as mighty and just as the celestial sphere. In addition to the fact that his delicate heart is always filled with gems of knowledge and pearls of learning, those matchless pearls of crafted marvels, the personages of precious words and best of the features of depicted things are matchless pearls of crafted marvel in the flawless palace and heavenly castle adorned with words garbed in raiment of words and insight, which seduced the hearts of world rule and mussed the natures of the people of the heart with their beguiling beauty.

Now, inasmuch as the mirror of the polished nature of time has always been an object of instruction for those possessed of insight, it constantly reflects images of designs and figures, but is sometimes tarnished with the verdigris of untoward vicissitudes. In such infelicitous times, if some instructive images from predecessors and successors are gazed upon and remembered, imagining and picturing to oneself the various sorts of chameleon designs, images of strange traces and marvelous shapes that occur with the passage and appearance of the spinning of the celestial sphere will certainly
cause the acquisition of the capital of the science of wisdom, will result in the perfection of the eye of learning by example, and will additionally console the felicitous person and troubled heart of the mighty sovereign by enlivening his mind and by pleasing his luminous inner self and his illuminated heart.

Therefore, every one of the past calligraphers and designers known in the Ottoman lands and Iran [3a] who have reached the level of Mir ‘Ali, Shah-Mahmud, Nur-ʿAli, painters of old like Bihzad, Arzhang, and Mani, from whose works their creator is seen, have produced fragments and leaves of unparalleled calligraphy and depiction, and have so endeavored in the meticulous art that they could split a hair into forty parts, and artists of old have spent their lives and done their utmost in writing, drawing, and bringing such things into existence. Some of their works have been given as gifts to the one blessed by the shadow of the phoenix of regality, i.e., the exalted monarch and emperor shadow of God, in hopes of regal favor and regard, and they have been gathered into one place and arranged, each with some conformity to the others, since it was His felicitous Majesty’s desire that they should be gilded and bound into an elaborate album. And in point of fact, because in his felicitous person there was an inclination for such gifts and presents of little or great skill, this slave of his, having seen long ago his master, Muhammad Sharif Baghdadi, join leaves of specimens and depictions of such master calligraphers [3b] to colorful paper and make them into an album, when once or twice some albums and books were composed, arranged, and adorned for his patron, they were acceptable and pleasing to the magnificent sovereign. May the deity preserve and keep the gracious person’s peerless gaze from error and danger, may the lord of all servants increase his justice, religious observance, and worship day by day and cause his protected realms to flourish, and may he grant him eternal life and prosperity, by the sanctity of the Lord of Apostles.

This time, when he brought together all the leaves of pictures and calligraphies and sent them to this humble servant, I responded, saying, “I hear and obey.” Whatever a royal command may be, considering service to be an obligation upon my very soul, I expended, insofar as possible, crafts unseen and marvels unheard of. [4a] Whether chameleon design of various colors in ebrī, sultanī, Ahmadabādi, Dowlatabādi, Khatayī, Adilshāhī, harirī, or Samarqandi papers, or whether with the art of joining there be two or three small leaves at the edges of every specimen in the fashion of fereskuri (?) striped cloth, it is not unknown or hidden to those with acute perception and sagacious people of insight that by looking at each one of them with a scrutinizing gaze, if attention is paid, God willing, the four corners and the facing one are all in harmony with and conforming to each other, be it in color or in size and length and width. It is hoped from the felicitous, mighty, and merciful sovereign that he will always ennoble his servants with such services and will take the opportunity to cast his favorable glance, and that they will not be without favor. May the credit that this least of his old servants, who has expended his time insofar as possible with such meticulousness and concern during these fast-moving days, has acquired over such a period by associating with several master artisans, becoming equal to experienced and learned masters, not be lost during the felicitous days of his monarchy. Praise be to God and to His Apostle, [4b] in the hopes that in the noble presence of such a majestic, just, kind, appreciative, and discriminating monarch, who is the refuge of the religion, this slapdash piece of handicraft may be acceptable and pleasing, and that, if he occasionally casts his peerless gaze upon it, it will be the greatest felicity, and in accordance with his felicitous command every one has been arranged in its proper place to perfection.

May the sultan of the world-illuminating sun shine forever with flashing rays of emanating lights on the throne of the dark firmament, and may the heads of the totality of creatures be enlightened and brightened by his felicitous lights. May the respected tents of my sovereign as mighty as Jamshed, refuge of the world, be extended and stretched with the eternal pegs and ropes of his generous, felicitous being until the promised day, may the sky-scraping top of his eternal fortune be crowned with pearls in the crown of rejoicing, may the might of his just rule increase daily, may the enemies of his state be crushed and driven to despair, may the Islamic realms repose in the shadow of his protection, and may the heads of his enemies be trampled beneath the hooves of his steed of fortune. Amen, through the sanctity of the Lord of Apostles.
NOTES

Author’s note: This article, originally written in Turkish, was submitted in 2007 for inclusion in the lexicographic volume for Dr. Filiz Çağman, which, unfortunately, has yet to be published. This revised English version is, of course, dedicated to Filiz Çağman, to whose scholarly mentorship and generous friendship I owe so much. This small gift, which in turn introduces the gifts presented to Sultan Ahmed by Kalender—one who, like Filiz, spent his life on the arts of the book—would not have been possible without the support of my colleagues and friends. I am grateful to Wheeler M. Thackston, who kindly provided the transliteration and English translation of two of the prefaces. I did not include the translation of the entire text of the Fâlnâme’s preface, since it was already published by Sergei Tourkin in the catalogue of the 2009 exhibition held in the Arthur M. Sackler Museum at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. See Massumeh Farhad with Serpil Bağcı, Falnama: The Book of Omens (Washington, D.C., 2009), 295–96.

1. According to the events and sources Âli mentions in his book, he most likely started to write in 1585–86, when he was on duty in Baghdad, completing the work in 1587 in Istanbul. I have not been able to find out when this epilogue (geyl) was composed. The text used in the 1926 edition, dated August 10–20, 1599 (evâhir-i Muḥarrem 1008), includes this geyl. See Mustafa ‘Âli, Menâkıḥ-ı Hünerverân, ed. İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal (Istanbul, 1926), 76–77. Another relatively early copy, of December 1601 (Comâzîyâl-âhir 1010), also includes the poem (Ms. E.H. 1231, fol. 73a–b). Esra Akın-Kıvanç, who published an extensive study on the text, does not include the poem in her translation but gives a transcription of it: Mustafa ‘Âli’s Epic Deeds of Artists: A Critical Edition of the Earliest Ottoman Text about the Calligraphers and Painters of the Islamic World, ed., trans., and annot. Esra Akın-Kıvanç (Leiden, 2011), 422n18. Akın-Kıvanç proposes that the poem was composed by the scribe of E.H. 1231, Ya’kub Iskâlî, who copied a 1494–95 (1003) version of the text, but she does not further discuss her attribution: Akın-Kıvanç, Mustafa ‘Âli’s Epic Deeds, 74.

2. Bir sâhîb-i hünerdîr o vaṣṣāl-i mu’teber / Erbâb-i ma’rîjetde bulunmaz aña mıṣâl
Her kö̀t’ada ki vaṣl-i elvâni derc ider / Kâvı-ı çaızâha şaṣṭa-i çarha olur hemâl
Vaṣl idiği yiran tremezler şiyanâline / Yeşpire şaṣta zann ider anı hep dide-i şiyanâ
Kâğûd u post kö̀sa klû kûrk yarmada / Her mü-aṣâkîf olan idemnez aña kül u kûl
Halâkâr zerfîsînî viî pervâzi cedveli / Kûnus muṣâḥâh aña o Halâk-i ber-kemâl
Pejmürde kâğûd ider idîyê ‘lîcî ile / Dil-ḩaste ‘âşkî nitekim şerbet-i viîsâl

Ey hai̇me gel bu beyt ile yaz ve râbihî / Kûmdir deyti iderler ise nâmîm su’âl
Ol kân-i ma’rejît ki Kalender Çavuṣ durur / Olsa güllân-i hâlâr be-güzi n’ola hâlîl
Pervâz-i kö̀t’ada ki ider naḵṣ-i pîr-gîrîh / Her biri pây-i âkla olur bend ile ‘içekâl
Bir kîmîe mêlîk omadî bu deñlî kö̀t’aya / Hem ḵîmadrî ma’ârîfe bu resme bezl-i mâl
Sa’tînîm iîl gîrmey ele dâd-i Ḫâk durur / ‘Ālemde sa’y u bezl ile bu mertbe ma’hâl
Sîzî uzıma ẖâmîn-i kelâm it du’â ile / Çûnîm zebân-i nîţeska vaṣfînda oûlu âl
Her sâhîb u şîm niteki şurûtle sun’-i Ḫâk / Çarh u şaʃkîla ġöstere vaṣl-i kebûd u âl
Ayunnasuvi vicâdun levh-i zalâmîneden / Çesbân idîша şaʃkîle ol Hayy-i lâyezâl.


4. Kalender’s connection to Mustafa Agha was clearly well known and talked about, and was also mentioned by other historians. In fact, when relating the events of the year 1613, Nâ’inmâ (d. 1715) notes that when the grand vizier Nasuh Pasha was trying to place his own men in the position of treasurer, he was not able to have the third treasurer, Kalender, dismissed, since he was also the building supervisor of the new mosque and a close affiliate of Mustafa Agha (Câmi-i Cedit’in binañasına emin ve Dârîsâsta Ağa Musâhafa Ağa’ya karın olmakla aña ta’arrûs edemedi): Nâ’inmâ Mustafa Efendi, Târîh-ı Na’îmî, ed. Mehmet İpşirli, 4 vols. (Ankara, 2007), 2:402.

5. Nâ’inmâ gives the day of this appointment as November 25 (22 Şevval): Târîh-ı Na’îmî, 2:418.

6. Kalender Pasha, who is mentioned twice in the 1616 expense records for the complex of Sultan Ahmed I, was still building supervisor on May 9, 1616 (22 Rebiyûl-ahur 1025). In a document from December 15, 1616 (5 Zilhice 1025) he is mentioned as being deceased: Ömer L. Barkan, Süleymaniye Cami ve İmaretı İnşaatı (1550–1557), 2 vols. (Ankara: 1972–79), 2:287; ‘Abdulkadir Efendi (d. after 1644) notes in his Târîh (History) that Kalender was still a member of the Imperial Council in July–August 1616 (Rêceb 1025), so he must have died between August and December of 1616: ‘Abdulkadir Efendi, Topçular Kâbiti ‘Abdülkâdir (Kadrî) Efendi Tarihî Metin ve Tahâlî, ed. Ziya Yılmazer, 2 vols. (Ankara, 2003), 1647.
It is not definitively known whether Album B. 409 is Kalender’s work. This issue will be discussed below, and at least some folios will be attributed to Kalender. Indeed, the resemblance of B. 409’s binding to that of B. 408 strengthens this attribution.

The album was featured in a 1999 exhibition in France: Topkapı à Versailles: Trésors de la cour ottomane, no. 146. The unpublished catalogue of the albums in the Topkapı Palace also includes detailed information on this and Album B. 408.

Bir kimse mâlık almâd bu derhî köṭ'eya / Hem ilâmâd mâ'ârîf bu resme bezî-mâl (Just as no one before him has possessed so many qiṭ‘as / No one has spent so much for talent, either.)

‘Ali, Menâkıb, 6, 55.

‘Ali says that during the years when he wrote his book, of course under Sultan Murad’s patronage, learned men, poets, men of refinement, calligraphers, illuminators, painters, and all of the talented creators of curious things were held in high esteem, and calligraphy of all styles (kalâm) was in high demand. He states that men of refinement were pleased to possess the qiṭ‘as of Mir ‘Ali (of Herat) and Sultan ‘Ali (of Mashhad). Istanbulites who wanted to buy a qiṭ‘a of Mir ‘Ali were willing to pay a hundred filori, and if that proved insufficient, they were ready to plead and beg. Following the 1585–86 debasement, 100 filori was equivalent to 12,000 aspers (for the exchange rates, see Şevket Pamuk, A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire [Cambridge, 2000], 136, 144). While the expenditure of such a substantial sum was undoubtedly reserved for a select few calligraphers, it nevertheless demonstrates what fortunes could be spent on a single qiṭ‘a. Additionally, ‘Ali writes that some chancery secretaries and scribes spent 40,000–50,000 gold coins, or even more, on a single album containing such illuminated and arranged qiṭ‘as. ‘Ali’s observations suggest that this taste or fashion spread from the court bureaucrats. ‘Ali returns to the prices of their qiṭ‘as in his chapter on the calligraphers of the nasta’liq script. This time, probably referring to the monetary value prior to the devaluation, he states that on a couple of occasions he saw the collectors paying 5,000–6,000 aspers for a qiṭ‘a of Mir Ali, and 400–500 for one by Sultan Ali. ‘Ali, Menâkıb, 6, 44.

‘Ali, Menâkıb, 7, 8, 53.

The relation between the science of geometry (hendese) and the shapes of forms is important; Kalender’s command of shapes (as a designer and illuminator) was owing to his knowledge of geometry.

He used paper decoupage motifs of arabesques composed of lobed medallions (shamsa) in these full-page decorations (fols. 14a, 14b, 15a, 15b), very similar to the ones he used in his next album, B. 408.

H. 2171, fol. 22b: “...hilä mânsîb-i celt-i kêzâ-i ‘asâkir-i Râm Îlî ile ser-efrâz ve sâ’t-r-i ‘ilemâdan mûmâst vâlemlâsîdî...”

For his career and books, see Mehmet İpşirli, Türkiye Diyanet Vâkıfî İslâm Ansiklopedisi (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2011), s.v. “Taşköprizâde Kemâleddin Efendi.”

H. 2171, fol. 22a.

H. 2171, fol. 22b.
This first section is closely related to Persian album prefaces, analyzed by David J. Roxburgh in Prefacing the Image: The Writing of Art History in Sixteenth-Century Iran (Leiden, 2001), esp. 88–103. For the texts of these prefaces, see Wheeler M. Thackston, Album Prefaces and Other Documents on the History of Calligraphers and Painters (Leiden, 2001).

27. H. 2171, fols. 17b–18a. The identification of the creation of the universe with the creation of an album was a trope also used by Timurid writers. See Roxburgh, Prefacing the Image, 89–90, 92.

28. H. 2171, fols. 17b–18a. The identification of the creation of the universe with the creation of an album was a trope also used by Timurid writers. See Roxburgh, Prefacing the Image, 89–90, 92.


32. H. 2171, fol. 19b.

33. While almost all contemporary historians note that Kalender’s works were highly esteemed and recognized among the Ottoman sultans, see Roxburgh, “The Album of Ahmed I,” examines the romantic content of the poetry in relation to the juxtaposed images.


35. H. 2171, fols. 20a–21b. "...peerless in joining paper, in the art of album-making (kār-i vaṣṣāli ve sanʿat-i muraḳḳaʿsāzī), and...highly esteemed and recognized among the Ottoman and Persian masters" (miyān-i üstādān Rūm u ‘Asemde māhkub u müsellemdür).

36. For these notes in H. 2153, fol. 87b, and H. 2160, fol. 4a, see Filiz Çağman, “On the Contents of the Four Istanbul Albums: A Colloquy Held 23–26 June 1980,” in Between China and Iran: Paintings from Four Istanbul Albums; A Colloquy Held 23–26 June 1980, ed. Ernst J. Grube and Eleanor Sims (New York, 1985), 34, fig. 16.

37. H. 2171, fol. 21b.

38. H. 2171, fol. 21b.

39. H. 2171, fol. 21b.

40. H. 2171, fol. 22a.

41. I would like to thank paper conservator Nil Çıngı Baydar for sharing her observations with me.

42. I would like to thank paper conservator Nil Çıngı Baydar for sharing her observations with me.

43. H. 2171, fols. 18a–18b.

44. The overall effect of this page recalls the Ottoman genealogical histories, where the sections on the Prophet Muhammad and the four Sunni caliphs are designed in a similar manner.


46. Once again, I would like to thank Nil Çıngı Baydar for drawing my attention to the difference in the material used.

47. The Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers cite a certain Receb Dede, who was a member of the Mevlevi order. In his treatise, Mustakimzade Süleyman Saʿdeddin Efendi (d. 1798) mentioned seeing a copy of the Koran by Receb Dede completed in 1610–11. Mustakimzade Süleyman Saʿdeddin Efendi, Taḥfe-i ḫatfātīn, ed. İbnülemim Mahmut Kemal (İstanbul, 1928), 202. Receb Dede, who was a contemporary of Kalender’s, might very well be the same calligrapher. In Ahmed I’s album, only one of his qīṭʿas is paired by Kalender—with a work of paper decoupage by a Mevlevi artist (fol. 22b)—reinforcing Receb Dede’s identity as a Mevlevi. For the reproduction of a qīṭʿa by Derviş Receb, see Fetvacı, “Album of Ahmed I,” fig. 6.

48. Katib al-Sultani Emir Mehmed Emin of Tirmiz may be Seyyid Mehmed Emin Hüseyini, known as Tirmizi. In his book on Ottoman calligraphers, Şevket Rado mentions having seen a manuscript copied by Seyyid Mehmed Emin Hüseyini in taʿliq dated 1599, demonstrating that he was a contemporary of Kalender: Şevket Rado, Türk Hattatları: XV. Yüzyıldan Günümüze kadar Gelmiş Ünlü Hattatların Hayatları ve Yazdıklarından Örnekler (İstanbul, 1983–85), 54. Apart from the seven-page preface, the album includes 166 images, 24 calligraphic specimens, and 11 text pages. The unfinished works are Safavid underdrawings of narrative scenes, with notes on the figures or furniture depicted therein giving the names of the colors they were to be painted (fol. 20a); these indicate that not all the images were specifically selected ones. Some of the Safavid underdrawings seem to have been painted or repainted by Ottoman artists (fols. 17a and 18b).

49. H. 2171, fols. 21a–21b.

50. The so-called bazaar painters are thought to have been active from the seventeenth-century onwards, producing single-page pictures, albums, and costume books for a cosmopolitan clientele. These painters and their works still need to be thoroughly studied. The term was coined by Metin And, who introduced these painters and their works: Metin And, “17. Yüzyıl Türk Çarşısı Ressamları, Tarih ve Toplum 16 (1985): 40–45.”


54. Ms. T. 439, fol. 12b. For the twelve folios from an album and a reproduction of the portrait, see V. Minorsky, with an introduction by J. V. S. Wilkinson, *The Chester Beatty Library: A Catalogue of the Turkish Manuscripts and Miniatures* (Dublin, 1958), 68–71, pl. 34a. In light of the stylistic features of its paintings, the unbound Dublin album, which is smaller in dimensions, must be contemporary with, or slightly later than B. 408. The construction and layout of the folios are quite different from B. 408, although they share many similar images. It includes a black ink drawing of a fairy, which also attests to the interrelation between two albums. This bust drawing (fol. 1b) must have been copied from an original in B. 408 (fol. 9b) signed as “..... Kalem-i ‘Ali Beg.” For the reproduction, see Ünver, “L’album d’Ahmed Ier,” 158.


56. Fetvaci, “Love in the Album of Ahmed I,” examines these paintings as images of daily life in Istanbul. She discusses their common focus on the theme of love, linking them to the literary interest of the age. Another group of paintings, smaller in size and depicting young men banqueting and reading books in meadows (fols. 16a, 17a, and 28a), is also displayed in the Dublin album, showing that this theme was fashionable at the turn of seventeenth century, in line with social trends. See n. 53 above.

57. The painter’s other works are found in the second volume of the *Şehinsâhnâme* (Book of the King of the Kings), by the court historian Seyyid Lokman Ashuri, which recounts the history of the years 1580 to 1584. The illustrated copy, completed in 1597–98, is in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library (B. 200). For the manuscript and its paintings, see Serpil Bağcı, Filiz Çağman, Günsel Renda, and Zeren Tanındı, *Ottoman Painting* (Istanbul, 2010), 153–57.

58. The text is identified by Değirmenci, *İktidar Oyunları*, 76. It is also mentioned in Fetvaci, “Album of Ahmed I,” 132.


60. For these portraits, see *The Sultan’s Portrait: Picturing the House of Osman*, exh. cat. (Istanbul, 2000), 91, 271, cat. nos. 8 and 49.

61. Ibid., 272, cat. no. 50.

62. Folio 31, the only folio disturbing this order that features two calligraphic specimens, was most likely inserted apparently conscious approach to the organization of his albums leads us to believe that he was responsible for the order of the folios.

63. As mentioned above, the binding was repaired at an unknown time, which suggests that the order of the images may be attributed to a later intervention. Yet Kalender’s apparently conscious approach to the organization of his albums leads us to believe that he was responsible for the order of the folios.

64. B. 408, fol. 1b. In her article on the album, Emine Fetvaci points to the emphasis on creation in the opening of the preface, and she aptly discusses the way the preface highlights the importance of the visual arts: Fetvaci, “Album of Ahmed I,” 128.

65. B. 408, fol. 2b: dâyımâ-cevahir-i ‘irfan-i ‘avârîf ve le’âlî-i ma’âni vü ma’ârîf birle kalb-i latîfîleri memlû olmağile ol dîrîr-i ‛ûrûr-i ‛ahaftâ ve bedâyî-i sarâyî-bî ’âyû ve sarâyder-i lâreybde olan enfes-i nefâyis-i ma’âsîn-i
The characterization of art as a means to wisdom is also included in the Safavid texts on art, such as Mir Sayyid Ahmad’s preface to the Amir Ghaib Beg Album, dated 1564–65, which opens with a sentence stating this concept: see Thackston, Album Prefaces, 24. However, Kalender’s text elaborates much more on this matter.


For the Persian Topkapı Fâlnâme, which may have served as a model of inspiration for Kalender’s royal gift, see Serpil Bağcı and Massumeh Farhad, “The Topkapı Persian Fâlnâme (TSM H. 1702),” in Farhad with Bağcı, Fâlnâme, 52–59.


For Nakşî (d. after 1622) and his paintings, see Esin Atıl, Ottoman Painting, 258–65.

For the copies of the Fâlnâme draw on the exhibition catalogue. In the present essay I will briefly explain the content of the Fâlnâme and focus on its introduction.


98. The word *yümn* means both auspicious and the right-hand side. The image that the fact appears on the right when the book is opened demonstrates that Kalender uses the word in both meanings.


101. On the close relationship between Mustafa Agha and Osman II during the latter's reign and the illustrated manuscripts that Mustafa Agha commissioned to present to the sultan, see Değirmenci, *İktidar Oyunları*, 79–116. For Mustafa Agha's patronage, mentioned in the preface of the text, see Farhad, *Falnama*, 148–49, 297.

102. On the illustrated copies of Medhi's translation and Mustafa Agha's patronage, mentioned in the preface of the text,

103. For the list of the works included, see Catalogue of Highly Important Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures, Sotheby’s (London), 6 December, 1967, pp. 75–76, lot 213.

104. The provenance of the Safavid album pages from the Metropolitan volume is traced by David J. Roxburgh in his article on Martin’s involvement in the dispersal of the Bahram Mirza Album in the Topkapı Palace: see David J. Roxburgh, “Disorderly Conduct?: F. R. Martin and the Bahram Mirza Album,” Muqarnas 15 (1998): 32–57. Roxburgh also mentions the similarity between some of the folios in the Bellini volume and the album pages made during Sultan Ahmed I’s reign, like those of B. 408; he quotes Martin’s attribution of the compilation of the Bellini Album to the 1600s, for Ahmed I.


106. F. R. Martin acknowledged the virtuosity of these compositions, which he reproduced in his book: ibid., pl. 269.

This article, which I dedicate to Dr. Filiz Çağman, introduces an unpublished document concerning the water distribution network of the Topkapı Palace. Preserved in the Topkapı Palace Museum Archive, the document examined here sheds light not only on the palace’s waterworks, but also on the locations and names of its earliest buildings (see appendix). It is undated, but as we shall soon see, certain clues in the text suggest that it was written immediately after the great earthquake of 1509, known as the “Little Apocalypse” (ḳıyāmet­i ṣuģrā).

The heading of the document reads: “Description of the fountains and water jet fountains, some of which have been flowing since olden times and some of which were added later” (Tafṣīl­i çeşmehā ve şādırvānhā ki baʿżı ḱadīmden aḳagelmişdür, ve baʿżı ṣoñradan olmüşdür). This oldest written source on the hydraulic landscape of the Topkapı Palace during the reigns of Mehmed II (r. 1444–46; 1451–81) and his successor, Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512), lists the palace’s water towers, distribution chambers, cisterns, water jet fountains, fountains, and faucets. It thus elucidates the original layout of the palace complex in that period, confirming the hypothetical reconstruction proposed years ago in my dissertation and subsequent book on the subject.1

Of the documents published thus far on the water supplies of the Topkapı Palace, the earliest dated example is the distribution register (tevzī’i defteri) of the Kırkçeşme and Kağthane waters that was prepared in 1568–69 (976) by the chief architect Sinan (d. 1588). The Kırkçeşme system, supplied from the Cebeciköy area, was renovated by Mehmed II and further expanded by Sinan with new sources from the Belgrade forest. Its waters, which entered the city from the gate of Eğrikapi and ran along steep slopes overlooking the Golden Horn, collected in the sixth-century Basilica Cistern (Yerebatan Sarayı). Because the Kırkçeşme waters were lower than the main courts of the Topkapı Palace, they first filled wells before being lifted to the correct height by water wheels.2

Another early source is the water distribution map drawn in 1584 by the architect Davud (d. 1598), a former superintendent of imperial water channels. The map exists in two copies and shows the Halkalı Channel’s “imperial” (mīrī, also known as ḥāṣṣa or beylik) branch, up to the point where it reaches the Old Palace (eski sarāy), built for Mehmed II in the 1450s. An inscription on the map indicates that since the reign of Mehmed this branch had provided the waters of the “imperial palace” (sarāy-i ʿāmire), namely, the Topkapı Palace, constructed by the same sultan between 1459 and 1478. (It was originally called the “New Palace” [yeñi sarāy], in relation to the old one at the center of the city.) The water carried by the imperial branch of the Halkalı Channel entered the city from the Edirne Gate and passed over the fourth-century Aqueduct of Valens (Bozdoğan Kemeri, renovated by Mehmed II) before reaching a distribution chamber (maḳsem) located at a corner of the Old Palace’s walled enclosure. From here it was distributed to various other locations, including the Topkapı Palace. Unfortunately, the part of the map showing the continuation of the channel’s imperial branch to the Topkapı Palace is absent.3 This missing section of the conduit is, however, recorded in later maps of the Halkalı Channel dated 1607 (1016) and 1748 (1161), which indicate that its water flowed from a water tower near Hagia Sophia to other water towers and distribution chambers within the palace grounds (fig. 1).4
The document under examination here records the rehabilitation of the Topkapı Palace’s waterworks in the aftermath of the 1509 earthquake. Later, in the 1520s, the chief architect ʿAlaūddin (d. 1539, nicknamed ‘Acem ʿAli, or Persian ‘Ali) would reconfigure this hydraulic system when he renovated the palace complex to reflect the changing notions of splendor that marked the reign of Süleyman I (r. 1520–66). Our document is thus significant for understanding the water distribution networks of the palace before this far-reaching Süleymanic rebuilding campaign. After the heading quoted above, the document lists eighteen fountains of different types. It should be noted at the outset that the term şādırvān, though usually associated with ablution fountains, is used here for water jet fountains that spout water into basins, as opposed to regular fountains designated by the term çeşme, whose water flows from spigots. The term muşluk, on the other hand, denotes a simpler, utilitarian faucet. An explanation at the end of the list of fountains reveals that the document was a petition presented to an unnamed sultan in order to outline the proposed distribution method and amount of water to be provided to each of the eighteen outlets. The author may have been the chief of water channels (ser-rāḥ-i āb, șuyolct başı), or the agha of the palace (sarāy aġası), who was responsible for construction projects at the Topkapı Palace.

According to the document, the amount of “imperial water” (ḫāṣṣa ṣu) brought to the palace from afar measured ten lüles (a lüle being a spout or pipe of standard diameter, 73.58 millimeters, for measuring the amount and rate of waterflow). These ten lüles comprised six lüles and another four lüles of water, each amount brought to the palace by a different architect, whose identities will be discussed below. We learn that the six lüles of water from an unspecified ayāzma (sacred
water, adding up to a total of sixteen lüles. It is more probable, however, that only four lüles were added to the former water supply, and that the old subterranean water channel carrying the six lüles was perhaps renewed after being damaged during the 1509 earthquake. The two conduits that brought the ten lüles of imperial water to the Topkapı Palace were probably the Halkali and Kirkeşme Channels, which in later periods conducted approximately the same amount of water to the palace.7

Because our document relates only the manner of distributing the ten lüles of water brought to the palace by the two architects, it does not list water wells and cisterns supplied by rainwater or natural springs located within the palace grounds. Only five cellars (sing. bodrum) are mentioned at the end. These the sultan had ordered to be used as cisterns for watering the palace’s outer garden: “It has been ordered that the aforesaid cellars, which are to be filled with rain water in winter and with the water brought to the palace, must be used for the garden. [But] except in winter, when water is plentiful, it is impossible at other times for water to collect in them as ordered.”

Before identifying the waterworks listed in the document, more must be said about its explanatory section, in which it is proposed that the ten lüles of water should be distributed from an “outside” water tower (terāzū) to other water towers and distribution chambers (maḳsem) located within the inner core of the palace complex. Into each of the water towers and distribution chambers would be placed lüle pipes of full-, half-, and quarter-sized diameters, in order to control the amount of water supplied to designated fountains. It is suggested that this work be carried out without changing the palace’s existing subterranean water channels (ṣu yolları). The lack of any reference in the document to newly built water towers implies that they too were probably already in place at the time it was written. Curiously, the explanatory section of the petition is in the present tense rather than the future, as one would expect from a project proposal. It translates as follows:

Some of this water is [to be] distributed to its location [directly] from the water tower (terāzū) on the outside; and some of it comes from the outside water tower to a water tower in the vicinity of the Timber Frame Palace (ṣatma sarāy) and is distributed thence; and some of it comes to a water tower in the vicinity of the Large Chamber (biyık oda) and is distributed thence; and some of it comes to a water tower in the vicinity of the fountain of the stables and is distributed thence. If approved by the Sublime Command, let there be no intervention whatsoever to the [existing] water channels (ṣu yolları), let the water be apportioned to each [tower’s] distribution chamber (maḳsem) from the outside water tower, and after sufficient water has reached the other water towers, it should be distributed from those water towers to each appointed place. And small lüle pipes should be installed so that, God willing, the aforesaid quantity of water continually flows through each of them. And in this distribution [system], which has been petitioned, some [places] have been apportioned full lüles, some half lüles, and others quarter lüles. [In sum:] the water flowing from the outside water tower measures ten lüles; for these ten lüles of water, there are separate water towers; and when two [lüles] of water collect in the same place, in order to know the amount whenever one takes a look, there are water towers and lüle pipes from which the water is distributed. Of these said ten lüles of imperial water, six lüles is the water brought by the architect ‘Acem [‘Ali], and four lüles by the architect Hamza. The ayāzma water was what previously flowed to the imperial palace. Now this ayāzma water is a quantity of water measuring six lüles; it is no longer sufficient for the designated places. There appears to be no possibility other than what is petitioned [here]. The command is His Majesty’s, the Refuge of the Universe, to make.

There are two clues here to help us date the document: first, the names of the architects who brought the waters, and second, the inclusion of the Timber Frame Palace (ṣatma sarāy) among the places mentioned within the palace complex. This no-longer-extant timber frame structure was built for Bayezid II after the earthquake of 1509. According to Ruhi Edrenevi, the chronicler of that period, the Byzantine sea walls on the Marmara side of the Topkapı Palace collapsed during the earthquake. While no damage came to the sultan’s actual residence—the domed Privy Chamber complex at the far left corner of the third court—the bath on the right-hand side of the same court developed cracks and had to be repaired (fig. 2a [C], and 2b [48–53, 38]): “And there being no defect in the actual domed palace (āstl
Fig. 2, a and b. Hypothetical reconstruction plans of the Topkapı Palace, ca. eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with numbers and letters added in accordance with pls. 10 and 11 in Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1991).

Fig. 2a. Hypothetical reconstruction plan of the palace precinct, identifying only the places mentioned in this article: A) first court; B) second court; C) third court; D) walled private garden terraces adjoining the third court; 1) Imperial Gate; 4) Gate of the Cold Fountain (Soğukçeşme Kapısı); 7) Iron Gate; 9) storehouse for wood; 10) Hagia Irene (armory); 11) court workshops; 12) terrace gate of the Tile Palace (Çinili Köşk); 14) gates to the courtyard of the stables; 19) Corps of the Water Wheel; 20) gate between the pantry and the Corps of the Water Wheel; 21) Middle Gate; 22) Gate of Felicity; 26) Column of the Goths; 28) site of the İshak Pasha Pavilion; 31) Christos Sotiros Spring (Ayazma Christos Sotiros); 37) site of the Byzantine church that was converted into an aviary; 39) Museum of the Ancient Near East; 41) Tile Palace (Çinili Köşk); 44) site of the Shore Kiosk (Yali Köşkü); 46) site of the imperial boathouses; 47) site of the dormitory of royal gardeners; 48) Seraglio Point (Saray Burnu).
Fig. 2b. Hypothetical reconstruction of the second and third courts of the Topkapı Palace, identifying only the spaces mentioned in this article: A) second court; B) third court; C) Harem with walled private garden; D) walled private garden terraces adjoining the third court; 1) Middle Gate; 6) gate between the pantry and Corps of the Water Wheel; 7) pantry gate; 8) gate of the imperial kitchen; 9) gate of the confectionary; 10) courtyard of the kitchens; 11) courtyard of the stables; 13) gate of the stables, connected to the terrace of the Tile Palace (Çinili Köşk); 25) Old Council Hall; 26) water distribution tank, known as Silver; 27) Gate of Felicity; 33) Large Chamber; 34) small garden of the bath furnace; 35) Chamber of Petitions; 37) site of the Pool Pavilion (Havuz Köşkü), now occupied by the eighteenth-century library of Ahmed III; 38) site of the bath, now occupied by the eighteenth-century Chamber of the Expeditionary Force; 39) portico of the Treasury-Bath complex; 40–45) Treasury-Bath complex: 42) loggia of the treasury, 45) disrobing chamber of the bath; 46) dormitory of pantry pages; 47) dormitory of treasury pages; 48–53) Privy Chamber complex: 50) throne hall, 51) Antechamber of the Water Jet Fountain (Şadırvan Sofası); 54) pool of the marble terrace; 55) marble terrace; 56) walled private garden terrace adjoining the third court; 57) lower terraces of the walled private garden adjoining the third court; 60) Mecidiye Kiosk, built over the basement of a late fifteenth-century pavilion; 66) tower kiosk of Selim III; 67–69) Courtyard of the Favorites: 69) large pool in front of the Courtyard of the Favorites; 70) walled private garden of the Harem; 71) large pool at the Courtyard of the Favorites, under the bedroom pavilion of Murad III.
Designed to withstand earthquakes, this timber frame (çatma) construction was most likely located in the walled private garden terraces adjoining the third court, which extend in front of the Privy Chamber complex and Harem quarters (fig. 2b [C, D]). The core of the Harem dates back to Mehmed II’s period, for Kritovoulos and Jacopo de Promontorio de Campis, writing in 1465 and 1475, respectively, tell us that women, too, were living at the Topkapı Palace. If we are to locate the Timber Frame Palace within the garden of the Harem, it is the only structure mentioned in our document to which water was allocated in that area, suggesting that the women’s quarters were relatively small and probably supplied by nearby cisterns or wells. When Sultan Süleyman ordered the aforementioned renovation and expansion of the Harem quarters, then known as the Palace of the Girls (saray-i duhterân), among the structures added was a timber frame house (hâne-i çatma). It is unclear whether this structure, located in the walled Harem garden—perhaps near today’s Courtyard of the Favorites (fig. 2b [67–69])—was a renovated version of the one built for Bayezid II.10

According to Ruhi Edrenevi, immediately after Bayezid II moved into the newly completed timber frame structure in 1510, he “made repairs to the Old Palace and ordered that water be brought to it.”11 As mentioned earlier, the Old Palace received its water from the Halkalı Channel through the Aqueduct of Valens, part of which had been damaged by the earthquake. A swamp formed around a section of the aqueduct that had collapsed, in the vicinity of the Old Palace.12 The consequent repairs most likely entailed extending the damaged water channel to the New Palace, where the sultan was residing. In a register of royal gifts (in‘âm defteri) pertaining to Bayezid II’s reign, we find mention of rewards given to those who worked on “the new water channel” (râh-i āb-i cedid), also referred to as “the imperial water channel” (râh-i āb-i ḫāṣṣa), which was completed in 1511. Those who were carrying out repairs at the Topkapı Palace also received bonuses.13

Several months before the new water channel was completed, rewards were conferred on individuals involved in the addition of a massive buttress to the garden façade of the damaged bath in the third court of the Topkapı Palace: “buttress of the wall of the imperial palace” (ṭayama-i divār-i sarāy-i ʿāmire). An elevation drawing of that “buttress” (ṭayama) is annotated with the details of its position, dimensions, and cost. This drawing, executed on a sheet of early sixteenth-century Italian-watermarked paper, is housed in the palace archive (fig. 3).14 While old photographs show the buttress in its entirety (fig. 4), only the lower part now remains.15 The elevation drawing, which depicts the buttress together with the bath’s garden façade, identifies a domed hall with three double-tiered windows as “the disrobing chamber of the bath” (ḥammām cāmekānı). Written under a double-tiered window of the adjacent hall on the right are the words “imperial treasury” (ḫizāne-i ʿāmire), and over the wall shown on the far left is an inscription stating, “This is the curtain wall at the edge of the kitchen” (bu maḥal maṭbaḵ kenarınuñ germesidür). These annotations prove that the building that adjoins the bath and is known today as the Fatih Köşkü (Mehmed the Conqueror’s Pavilion) was already in use at that time as the imperial treasury of the inner palace. The annotations also reveal that the courtyard of the kitchens in the second court extended, as now, up to the curtain wall (germe) separating the second and third courts (fig. 2b [10]).

The repair of the bath must have overlapped with the renovation of the palace’s waterworks. Among the individuals Bayezid II rewarded in 1511 for their work on the imperial water channel were thirty-five “water channel builders” and their chief, the architect Miʿmar Hayrüd-din, who perhaps prepared our document. The royal architects who received rewards in the same year included Miʿmar Ali bin ʿAbdullah and his son Miʿmar Hamza.16 I believe that this father-son pair are the two architects mentioned in our document as having brought ten lüles of water to the Topkapı Palace: ‘Acem Miʿmar and Miʿmar Hamza. The architect referred to as
Fig. 3. Elevation drawing of the buttress on the garden façade of the bath in the third court of the Topkapı Palace, ca. 1509–11. Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum Archive (TSMA), E. 12307, no. 2. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Archive)

Fig. 4. Old photograph of the Topkapı Palace from the Sea of Marmara, showing the sea walls, the Treasury-Bath complex before its restoration in the 1940s, and the kitchens. (After Sedat Hakkı Eldem and Feridun Akozan, Topkapı Sarayı: Bir Mimari Araştırma [Istanbul, 1981], pl. 168)
The availability of water had played a determining role in the selection of the site for Mehmed II’s New Palace; the sultan authorized construction of the building only after being convinced by experts that bringing water to it was feasible. The project proposal submitted to his successor, Sinan, and the latter’s immediate successors, then, this architect was a preeminent hydraulic engineer, an expertise demonstrating the immense value attached to waterworks in Ottoman architectural practice. Hydraulic engineering projects involved the application of fluid mechanics principles in the collection, transportation, storage, measurement, distribution, and use of water in both architecture and landscape architecture, two spheres that were intimately interconnected in the Topkapı Palace.

WATER TOWERS

The availability of water had played a determining role in the selection of the site for Mehmed II’s New Palace; the sultan authorized construction of the building only after being convinced by experts that bringing water to it was feasible. The project proposal submitted to his successor largely concerned the distribution network and the amount of water involved, without detailing the water supply system that brought the ten lüle of water to the palace. Hence, neither the sources of the “imperial water” (ḫāṣṣa ṣu) nor the location of the ayāzma are specified. As I have suggested above, the waters in question were probably conveyed to the Topkapı Palace by the Halkalı and Kırkçeşme Channels. Further archival work and archaeological investigations will add to our knowledge of where these waters originated and
of the combined network of aqueducts and subterranean channels that transported them to the palace.\textsuperscript{26} For the time being, we are in a better position to consider the water towers (terāzū)—also referred to by the term maksem (water distribution chamber)—that our document enumerates (table 1).

In the 1748 map of the Halkalı Channel, the imperial water is distributed from the first water tower on the palace’s fortress wall at the left side of the Imperial Gate to a second water tower to the left of the Middle Gate. From here, the water reaches a distribution chamber at the far right corner of the second court (figs. 1 and 2a \{1, 21, 22\}). The first of these towers—that near the Imperial Gate—can still be identified today, and is mentioned in our document as “the water tower on the fortress wall” (hisār divārindaki terāzū).\textsuperscript{27} Another water tower close by is referred to in the document as being “next to the armory,” namely, the Church of Hagia Irene, on the left side of the first court, which Mehmed II converted into the palace armory. This unknown water tower seems to have been located in the vicinity of the palace workshops in that area, which extended along the imperial fortress wall toward the Golden Horn, up to the present Soğukçeşme Gate (Cold Fountain Gate) (fig. 2a \{10, 11\}). The water tower may have accompanied two recently discovered huge wells at the royal mint, near Hagia Irene.\textsuperscript{28} As we shall see, our document shows that this tower would supply water to two of the underground cellars the sultan ordered to be used as cisterns for watering the outer garden. There is also a reference to a water distribution cistern (savak) that required no extra water: “Regarding the water distribution cistern in front of the gate, it is not necessary to make [additional] water flow there, for when the water seeps into the ground and overflows the pipe, it flows from there.” This savak appears to have been located in front of one of the fortress gates that provided access into the outer garden, along the same wall running from the Imperial Gate down toward the Golden Horn. The absence of any information regarding the places to which the savak distributed water suggests that it too supplied the outer garden. If so, this cistern may have been close to the Cold Fountain or Iron Gates of the fortress wall (fig. 2a \{4, 7\}).\textsuperscript{29}

What the document calls “the water tower on the outside” (taṣra[da]ği terāzū, taṣradaki terāzū)—henceforth the outside tower—distributed water not only to three water towers in the second and third courts, but also directly to some fountains and water jet fountains within these courts (table 1). Situated outside these inner courts of the palace, the outside tower was probably somewhere in the first court. Though no traces of it survive, it can be identified with the water tower depicted on the left side of the Middle Gate on the 1748 map of the Halkalı Channel (figs. 1 and 2a \{21\}). Perhaps the remains of this water tower may be found behind a large fountain currently abutting the inner face of the wall flanking this gate.

The three water towers supplied by the outside tower were located “next to the Timber Frame Palace,” “next to the Large Chamber,” and “next to the fountain of the stables.” The first of these towers probably stood in the vicinity of the walled private garden terraces abutting the third court, close to the Privy Chamber and the part of the Harem known today as the Courtyard of the Favorites. Between the Privy Chamber and this courtyard, which features two large pools (fig. 2b \{69, 71\}), is a structure called the Tower Pavilion (küle köşkü), built by Selim III (r. 1789–1807). The three superimposed water depots under this pavilion may have been associated with a now-lost water tower (fig. 2b \{66\}).\textsuperscript{30}

The second water tower supplied by the outside tower was located next to the Large Chamber, a dormitory for novice boys that extended on the right-hand side of the Gate of Felicity, leading into the third court. Its remains can still be found at the lavatory in the far right corner of the second court (fig. 2b \{26, 33\}).\textsuperscript{31} This structure is illustrated on the 1748 map of the Halkalı Channel, where it is labeled the “water distribution chamber (su maksemi) known as Silver (gümüş), near the Gate of Felicity” (fig. 1).\textsuperscript{32} Our document shows that this maksem only supplied the third court and a nearby garden pavilion. Its function is described as follows in the 1607 map of the Halkalı Channel: “This is the gathering place of water (su mecmâ’i) behind the Large Chamber inside the Imperial Palace; water for the Imperial Palace gathers [there] and is then distributed; its water consists of three lüles, two kamış, and one maṣura.” (The latter two terms refer to water-measur-
Table 1. DISTRIBUTION NETWORK OF WATER TOWERS (waterworks are numbered according to their order in the document).

• **The water tower next to the Timber Frame Palace** (çatma yanındaki terāzū, çatma sarāy civārin(bt]a bir terāzū)
  
  **WALLED PRIVATE GARDEN TERRACES ADJOINING THE THIRD COURT:**
  1. Water jet fountain of the terrace (1 lülē).
  2. Water jet fountain of the Timber Frame Palace (1/2 lülē).

• **The outside water tower** (taşradaki terāzū)
  
  **THIRD COURT:**
  3. Water jet fountain under the throne hall (1/2 lülē).
  8. Reservoir of the bath (1 lülē).
  9. Fountain of the gazebo (1 lülē).

**SECOND COURT:**
  12. Fountain of the stables (1 lülē).

• **The water tower next to the Large Chamber** (büyük oda yanındaki terāzū)
  
  **THIRD COURT:**
  4. Water jet fountain of the New Palace (1/2 lülē).
  5–7. Water jet fountain[s] of the bath (3 in number, 2 lülēs).
  10. A faucet in front of the Large Chamber (1/4 lülē).

**OUTER GARDEN:**
  15. Fountain of the Marble Kiosk (1/4 lülē).

• **The water tower on the wall of the imperial kitchen** (ḫāṣṣ maṭbaḫ dīvārindaki terāzū)
  
  **SECOND COURT:**
  13. Fountain of the imperial kitchen (1/2 lülē).
  14. Fountain of the confectionary (1/2 lülē).

• **The water tower next to the fountain of the stables** (aḫur çeşmesi yanındaki terāzū)
  
  **OUTER GARDEN:**
  16. Fountain of the Tile Palace (1/4 lülē).

• **The water tower inside the [outer] garden** (bāğ içindeki terāzū)
  
  **OUTER GARDEN:**
  17. Fountain of the kiosk next to the Tile Palace (1/4 lülē).
  18. Fountain of the Mansion/Palace (1/4 lülē).
  E. Cellar under the garden.

**OTHER WATER TOWERS ON OR NEAR THE FORTRESS WALL**

• **The water tower on the fortress wall** (ḫiṣār dīvārindaki terāzū)
  B. Cellar at the storehouse for wood.
  C. Cellar in front of the gate of the Tile Palace.

• **The water tower next to the armory** (cebeḫāne yanındaki terāzū)
  A. Cellar outside the fortress gate.
  D. Cellar at the Mansion/Palace.

• **The water distribution cistern in front of the gate** (ḳapu öñinde olan ṣavāḳ).
The Topkapı Palace’s Waterworks and Earliest Buildings, Circa 1509

Water Channel, are not mentioned in our document, they probably supplied the nearby water tower “on the wall of the imperial kitchen.”

It seems that these wells began to be used to their full capacity after Sinan increased the amount of water coming from the Kırkçeşme Channel.

The other water tower was located in the palace’s outer garden, on the side overlooking the Golden Horn. It supplied two no-longer-extant pavilions near the Tile Palace, which will be discussed below (fig. 2a [41]).

The waterworks in this area may have been destroyed together with the garden terraces and other structures that were razed during the creation of Gülhane Park in 1912.

Of the water towers mentioned in our document, only those of the first and second courts are shown on the 1748 map of the Halkalı Channel (fig. 1). Because this map and its predecessor, dated 1607, omit the third court of the palace and the outer garden, they do not reflect the full complexity of the Topkapı Palace’s waterworks, which, as noted above, were also supplied by the Kırkçeşme Channel.

WATER JET FOUNTAINS, FOUNTAINS, AND FAUCETS

The document’s list of different types of fountains helps us visualize the overall layout of the Topkapı Palace during the reigns of Mehmed II and Bayezid II (table 2). Giovanni Maria Angiolello, who served at Mehmed’s court between 1474 and 1481, described the palace complex as consisting of three large walled courts, each entered through a double gate. These contiguous courts were surrounded on all three sides by an outer garden, itself delimited by a fortress wall (figs. 5–7).

Our document echoes this arrangement: starting with the waterworks of the third court’s walled private garden terraces, it proceeds to those of the third court itself, then the second court, and finally the outer garden (table 2). This hidden order within the document makes it easier to
guess the specific locations of the water jet fountains (şādrvān), fountains (çeşme), and faucets (muṣluḳ) that are itemized with no further explanation.

It is noteworthy that the first eleven of the eighteen listed waterworks belong to the prestigious third court and the walled private garden terraces attached to this court. These are followed by the remaining water outlets, all of which are simple fountains (çeşme), three in the second court, and four in the outer garden. No mention is made of any fountain in the first court. It is known from Angiolello's description and from images depicting the Topkapı Palace in the last quarter of the fifteenth century that the left and right sides of this court were originally empty (figs. 5–7). Later, however, service buildings were added here, and the 1748 map of the Halkalı Channel shows the water conducted to an infirmary and bakery on the left-hand side of the first court, along with a freestanding fountain inside the court (fig. 1).36

The seven water jet fountains with which the list begins were the most elaborate in the palace’s collection of waterworks. They all furnished running water to the third court’s walled private garden terraces and to the royal apartments marking the two far corners of the

Table 2. LOCATIONS OF WATER JET FOUNTAINS, FOUNTAINS, AND FAUCETS (waterworks are numbered according to their order in the document).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>• WALLED PRIVATE GARDEN TERRACES ADJOINING THE THIRD COURT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Water jet fountain of the terrace (şādrvān-i soffa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1/2 lüle from the water tower next to the Timber Frame [Palace]).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Water jet fountain of the Timber Frame Palace (şādrvān-i çatma)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1/2 lüle from the water tower next to the Timber Frame [Palace]).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• THIRD COURT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Water jet fountain under the throne hall (şādrvān, dīvānḫāne altında)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1/2 lüle from the outside water tower).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Water jet fountain of the New Palace (şādrvān-i yeñi sarāy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1/2 lüle from the water tower next to the Large Chamber).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–7. Water jet fountain[s] of the bath (şādrvān-i hammām)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3 in number, 2 lüles from the water tower next to the Large Chamber).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Reservoir of the bath (ḫazīne-i hammām)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1 lüle from the outside water tower).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Fountain of the gazebo (çeşme-i çārdāḳ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1 lüle from the outside water tower).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. A faucet in front of the Large Chamber (büyük oda öñinde bir muṣluḳ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1/4 lüle from the water tower next to the Large Chamber).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• SECOND COURT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. A faucet in front of the treasury and pantry [dormitories] (ḫazīne ile kilār öñinde bir muṣluḳ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1/4 lüle from the outside water tower).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Fountain of the stables (çeşme-i adjur)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1 lüle from the outside water tower).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Fountain of the imperial kitchen (çeşme-i hāṣṣ maṭbaḫ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1/2 lüle from the water tower on the wall of the imperial kitchen).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Fountain of the confectionary (çeşme-i ħelvacıyān)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1/2 lüle from the water tower on the wall of the imperial kitchen).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• OUTER GARDEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Fountain of the Marble Kiosk (çeşme-i mermer köşk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1/4 lüle from the water tower next to the Large Chamber).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Fountain of the Tile Palace (çeşme-i sırça sarāy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1/4 lüle from the water tower next to the fountain of the stables).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Fountain of the kiosk next to the Tile Palace (çeşme-i sırça sarāyı yanında olan köşk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1/4 lüle from the water tower inside the garden).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Fountain of the Mansion/Palace (çeşme-i maḥall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1/4 lüle from the water tower inside the garden).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig. 5. Detail from Giovanni Andrea Vavassore’s map of Istanbul, showing the Topkapı Palace, ca. 1479–81. Woodcut printed in Venice, ca. 1520–30. Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Sign. IV C44. (Photo: courtesy of the Staatsbibliothek)

Fig. 6. Detail from Cristoforo Buondelmonti’s map of Istanbul, showing the Topkapı Palace. From the Liber Insularum Archipelagi, ink drawing, early 1480s. Düsseldorf, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, Ms. G. 13, fol. 54r. (Photo: courtesy of the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek)
court itself, that is, the Privy Chamber complex in the left corner and Mehmed the Conqueror’s Pavilion, with its adjoining bath, in the right (hereafter referred to as the Treasury-Bath complex) (fig. 2b [39–45, 48–53]). The first two water jet fountains—supplied by the water tower of the Timber Frame Palace (çatma saray)—are the şādırvān-i şoffa and şādırvān-i çatma. The prominent placement of these two fountains in the list was in itself confirmation of the prestige of the Timber Frame Palace, recently constructed as Bayezid II’s residence, and of the nearby terrace (şoffa) of the domed Privy Chamber, raised on vaulted substructures. According to Mehmed II’s Ḹānūnname (Law Code) of circa 1477–81, the Privy Chamber complex in the third court was built after the Chamber of Petitions in the same court.37 Angiolello provides a vivid eyewitness account of this complex along with its accompanying marble-paved terrace, which featured a large pool:

On the left-hand side of the [third] court is the palace (Palazo) where the Grand Turk (Gran Turco) resides; most of that palace is vaulted [domed] in construction and has many chambers and summer and winter rooms. The part that looks toward Pera [Galata] has a portico which is above the large garden, from which rise many cypresses that reach [the height of] the balconies of this portico, and that portico is built on two [rows of] columns and is completely vaulted, and in the middle is a fountain that flows into a beautiful basin worked in marble with profiles and colonnettes of porphyry and serpentine, and in this basin are many sorts of fish, and the Grand Turk derives great pleasure from watching them.38

Its multiple domes announcing its superior status with respect to other buildings in the same court, the Privy Chamber complex was not, as some believe, erected by Selim I. In any case, it is inconceivable that Mehmed II would have neglected this corner of the third court, commanding spectacular views over the city. We learn from Angiolello that the marble terrace of the Privy Chamber complex, which faced Pera, was, as today, host to a colonnaded double portico and a pool with a fountain spraying jets of water. The şādırvān “of the terrace” listed in our document likely belonged to this pool, decorated in red and green marble.39 The domed summer chambers mentioned by Angiolello, in turn, appear to have been pavilions atop the marble terrace. One of these was a transparent crystal kiosk described by Menavino (ca. 1504–15), a Genoese page who lived in the palace during Bayezid II’s reign. Its waters, cascading with a sweet murmur, were pleasing to the eye and the ear:

In this seraglio is a room entirely made of transparent glass squares joined and fastened together with tin rods, and it is in the guise of a round cupola, resembling a stretched tent when seen from a distance. In the past, water once ran over it with a marvelous artifice, flowing down from the cupola and descending into the garden. The king frequently used to go there in the summertime to sleep during the day, to the cool and sweet murmur of the resounding waters. But at present, because its pipes are broken, this water is directed elsewhere.40

The water pipes, which had functioned in the past, may have been broken during the earthquake of 1509. This delightful domed kiosk was likely built for Mehmed II, rather than his successor. Later sources suggest that it stood near the pool on the terrace and had a polychrome
marble floor as well as a dome whose lantern rested on crystal colonnettes. The kiosk’s transparent walls were formed of expertly joined crystal panels placed between six or eight marble columns. This extraordinary structure disappeared during subsequent renovations to the marble terrace and its pool.\(^{41}\)

The third water jet fountain to be fed from the outside tower is specified in our document as being “under the throne hall” (divanhane altinda). This may be the freestanding marble fountain at the center of the domed antechamber within the entrance from the third court into the divanhane of the Privy Chamber, known today as the Şadırvan Sofası (Antechamber of the Water Jet Fountain). The fountain was probably supplied by water from the vaulted basement under it (figs. 2b [50 and 51], and 8). From an ancient fluted bowl of green breccia at the top of the fountain, the water flows through pink granite spouts into a scalloped white marble basin below. This all’antica fountain, complete with classical pearl moldings and scallop-shell motifs, reflects Mehmed II’s penchant for the antique, which was prompted by his familiarity with the Italian Renaissance.\(^{42}\) The same taste appears to have informed the şadırvan of the pool terrace with its accompanying tempietto-like crystal kiosk, all of which would have presented a marked contrast to the porticoes of the Privy Chamber complex, built in a quintessentially Ottoman manner with pointed arches and muqarnas capitals. Abutting this marble-paved terrace was Mehmed’s hanging garden, created in the 1460s. Enclosed by walls with round-arched grilled windows through which to look out, it resonated with the classically inspired giardini pensili of contemporaneous Italian palaces (fig. 2b [55, 56]).\(^{43}\)

The Privy Chamber complex—which Ruhi Edreneyi, as quoted earlier, termed “the actual domed palace”—is clearly visible in a version of Cristoforo Buondelmonti’s map of Istanbul datable to the beginning of Bayezid II’s reign (fig. 6). This map, discovered and published by Ian Manners in 1997, sheds new light on the original layout of the Topkapı Palace, particularly its third court and outer garden. Manners dated it to the reign of Mehmed II, but I believe it must have been drawn shortly after this sultan’s death in 1481, as it includes the mausoleum that Bayezid II built for his father (sepulcrum sultani Meometi) in the latter’s mosque complex.\(^{44}\) Supporting an attribution to the early 1480s is the map’s depiction of the Hagia Sophia with a single minaret. In a woodcut illustrating Hartmann Schedel’s Liber Chronicarum, published in Nuremberg in 1493, the sanctuary is shown with its second minaret, which was added by Bayezid II (fig. 7).\(^{45}\) This print is based on a drawing done in 1490, at the time when the ninth-century Nea Ekklesia (Güngörmez Kilisesi)—which had been converted into a gunpowder magazine—exploded after being struck by lightning.\(^{46}\) Moreover, the Buondelmonti map does not include Bayezid II’s mosque, built between 1501 and 1505 on a plot of land carved out from the garden of the Old Palace. It instead shows that garden when it still contained the Column of Theodosius I, pieces of which would later be incorporated into the base of the double-bath built for Bayezid II, circa 1505–8, next to his mosque.\(^{47}\)

The Buondelmonti map is one of the most important visual documents for the Topkapı Palace’s architecture prior to the earthquake of 1509. It depicts certain
structures not represented in the map of Giovanni Andrea Vavassore, which is thought to be based on a lost prototype datable to the years 1479–81, toward the end of Mehmed II’s reign (figs. 5 and 6). Thus we learn from the Buondelmonti map that the twin domes currently adjacent to the hipped-roofed main section of the Treasury-Bath complex were part of the original design (figs. 9 and 2b[44, 45]), though the hypothetical reconstruction of Sedat Hakki Eldem and Feridun Akozan assumes that they were added later. The dome covering the bath’s disrobing chamber also appears in the circa 1509–11 elevation drawing of the buttress, discussed above (fig. 3). The omission of the second dome, surmounting the adjacent hall of the imperial treasury, can be explained by the fact that this drawing primarily concerns the position of the buttress and does not aim to fully illustrate the garden façade of the Treasury-Bath complex.

The Buondelmonti map also proves that the loggia of the imperial treasury, featuring a central water jet fountain, was not an eighteenth-century addition, as some have supposed. Designed as a belvedere in the building’s outer corner, the loggia has round arches that rest on all’antica composite Ionic capitals in the Renaissance manner. The arches and capitals are identical to those of the Treasury-Bath complex’s columnar portico, which extends along the length of the third court (figs. 9, 10, and 2b [39, 42]). These details reflect the same penchant for the classical that we encountered in Mehmed II’s Privy Chamber complex. Despite the different styles of their arcades, both buildings make use of spoliai monumental white marble and green breccia columns. The courtyard portico of the Treasury-Bath complex once featured a ceiling decorated with figural mosaics in the Byzantine manner. This unique edifice blended the Ottoman architectural style with elements inspired by the Byzantine and Italian Renaissance traditions, which referenced, respectively, the Eastern and Western Roman Empires. Its composite architecture, together with the diversity of treasures and manuscripts housed within it, articulated the universal imperial vision of Mehmed II, who appropriated the title “Emperor of Rome” (Kayser-i Rüm).

Let us now turn to the remaining four şâdirvâns listed in the document, all of which seem to have been located along the right wing of the third court: one is called the “water jet fountain of the New Palace” (şâdirvân-ı yeñi sarây), while the other three are jointly referred to as the “water jet fountain[s] of the bath, 3 in number” (şâdirvân-ı ḥammâm, 3 kat’â). These were all fed by the water distribution chamber at the far right corner of the second court, which abutted the Large Chamber of the third court. The “New Palace” most likely refers to the building at the far right corner of the third court, which later came to be known as Mehmed the Conqueror’s Pavilion. Located adjacent to the recently renovated bath, it was identified in a late Ottoman oral palace tradition as the first royal mansion (kaşr) this sultan constructed in his “New Palace,” around 1462–63. According to the same tradition, it was originally designed as a lieu de plaisance but was transformed by Mehmed II into a treasury after the completion of other structures. This impressive suite of three halls, with its view-commanding loggia, was designed as a unified whole together with the adjacent bath’s disrobing chamber, which constituted a fourth hall (figs. 2b [39–45], and 9). Fronted by a continuous columnar portico
The Topkapı Palace’s Waterworks and Earliest Buildings, Circa 1509

Facing the third court, it is built in expensive ashlar masonry, unlike the Privy Chamber complex across from it, which is constructed in alternating courses of stone and brick.

If my identification is correct, the “water jet fountain of the New Palace” must be the scalloped white marble basin with spouting jets at the center of the open loggia (fig. 10). This fountain is carved from the same gray-streaked Marmara (Proconnesian) marble as the loggia’s custom-made capitals, in a manner befitting their classicizing design. At some unknown date, this superb loggia and the matching portico along the third court were walled in to provide additional storage space for the imperial treasury. These arcades can no longer be seen in a painting from the Hünernâme dating from 1584–85, which depicts the third court and the outer garden (fig. 11). Photographs confirm that the magnificent loggia (fig. 4) and courtyard portico remained closed off by walls until the Topkapı Palace was renovated as a museum.54

The three şâdırvân of the bath adjoining the imperial treasury are lost (fig. 2b [38, 45]). A painting in the Hünernâme of Sultan Süleyman undressing in this bath shows that one of these water jet fountains, made of luxurious pink and green marble, marked the center of the domed disrobing hall (fig. 12). Descriptions of the bath mention not only this fountain but also two large swimming pools with water jets.55 After listing the three fountains with spouting jets and the water supplied from the outside tower to the “reservoir of the bath” (ḥazīne-i hammām), our document turns to other fountains (çeşme) and faucets (muṣluḳ).

The absence of any further reference to a şâdırvân in the remaining areas of the palace signifies the status and luxury of the main royal structures within the third court and its walled private garden terraces. This hierarchy attests to the primacy of water jet fountains as an extravagant form of conspicuous consumption and source of prestige. The “fountain of the gazebo” (çeşme-i çârdâḳ), which was supplied by the outside tower, may have stood in the small walled garden between the furnace of the bath and the Large Chamber (fig. 2b [33, 34]). According to Angiolello, this corner of the third court had an aviary with pigeons that wore pearl anklets and performed summersaults to the sound of a whistle.
Another possible location for the gazebo fountain is the no-longer-extant Pool Pavilion (Havuz Köşkü), which once occupied the present site of the eighteenth-century freestanding library of Ahmed III, inside the third court (fig. 2b [37]). At the time it was demolished, the pavilion was attributed to Selim I, around 1519. However, I believe it is quite possible that this columnar open canopy with a domical vault, marking the center of a rectangular pool, was built earlier, by Mehmed II. Its twelve antique green porphyry columns were reused in the extant eighteenth-century portico of the Chamber of the Expeditionary Force (fig. 2b [38]).

Listed after the “fountain of the gazebo” is the faucet in front of the Large Chamber (as mentioned earlier, a dormitory for novice boys), which was supplied by the water distribution chamber abutting it in the second court. The faucet in front of the dormitories of pages serving the treasury and pantry, meanwhile, was fed from the outside tower (fig. 2b [46 and 47]).

The Buondelmonti map depicts these two dormitories, extending between the Treasury-Bath and Privy Chamber complexes, as a unified wing fronted by a continuous portico and covered by a hipped roof (fig. 6). The map also shows the hipped-roofed Chamber of Petitions—which is mentioned in Mehmed II’s Kânûn-nâme—just inside the main entrance to the third court, the Gate of Felicity. Our document does not mention any fountains in relation to the Chamber of Petitions and the Old Council Hall, built for the same sultan in the second court (fig. 2b [25, 35]). No space is left in the Buondelmonti map to represent the details of this court, which appears squeezed between the first and third courts. Only three fountains (çeşme) are listed in the second court: the “fountain of the stables: one lüle from the outside water tower”; the “fountain of the imperial kitchen, half a lüle from the water tower on the wall of the imperial kitchen”; and the “fountain of the confectionary, half a lüle from the same water tower” (table 2). In his description of the stables and kitchens, respec-
the Topkapı Palace’s Waterworks and Earliest Buildings, Circa 1509

(Mermer Köşk). Because it received water from the water tower next to the Large Chamber, this fountain, together with the kiosk itself, may be identified with the nearby Ishakiye Kiosk. Built for Mehemd II between 1470 and 1472 on the Marmara side of the outer garden, downhill from the Treasury-Bath complex, it was demolished in the second half of the nineteenth century (fig. 2a [28]). 61 Another possibility is that the Marble Kiosk stood on the walled garden terrace, extending in front of the Treasury-Bath complex. The edge of the terrace that overlooks the Sea of Marmara contains the basement of a long rectangular pavilion attributed to Mehemd II, the upper part of which was replaced in the nineteenth century with the present neoclassical Mecidiye Kiosk (fig. 2b [60]). 62

The other three fountains were in the part of the outer garden facing the Golden Horn. There is no mention in our document of the small wooden kiosk that we know Bayezid II built in this area, outside the Byzantine sea walls of the palace. The aforementioned Hünernâme painting (ca. 1584–85) and a panoramic view of the Topkapı Place in an Austrian Habsburg Album (ca. 1590) show the kiosk after it had been renovated in 1583 (figs. 11 and 13). This wooden pavilion, in turn, was replaced between 1591 and 1593 with the domed Shore Kiosk (Yalı Köşk), built more luxuriously in ashlar masonry and surrounded by a marble colonnade. The latter is seen in the Dryden Album, datable to the late 1590s (figs. 2a [44], and 14[a and b]). 63

The “fountain of the Tile Palace” (sırça sarāy) was no doubt located in the garden pavilion known today as the Çinili Köşk (Tiled Pavilion). This monumental structure was built for Mehemd II in 1472 in the international Timurid-Turkmen mode and decorated in the manner of the Karamanid principality of central Anatolia, which had recently been subjugated by the sultan. Its original name, “Tile Palace,” is repeated by Tursun Beg in his late fifteenth-century chronicle of Mehemd II’s reign, as well as by Menavino (Sercessarai). The fountain was supplied by the water tower next to the fountain of the stables, located nearby (fig. 2a [14, 41]). 64

The second fountain, identified as belonging to the “pavilion next to the Tile Palace” (sırça sarāyi̇n yanında olan köşk), was instead fed from the neighboring water tower of the outer garden. The pavilion in question must be the one that Tursun Beg describes as being in the

Fig. 12. Detail from a two-page painting, showing Sultan Süleyman undressing in the disrobing chamber of the bath in the third court. From Seyyid Lokman, Hünernâme, ca. 1584–85. Istanbul, TSMK, H. 1524, fol. 148r. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)
“Ottoman mode” (tavr-i ʿOsmānī), as opposed to the “Tile Palace” (sırça sarāy) in its vicinity, which was constructed in the “mode of the Persian kings” (tavr-i ekāsire). No longer extant, this pavilion seems to have stood over the Byzantine substructure now occupied by the Museum of the Ancient Near East (fig. 2a [39]).65 The Ottoman-style pavilion and its Persianate counterpart shared the edge of the same terrace raised on vaulted substructures, judging by the Hünernāme painting of the outer garden, where these two pavilions are depicted side by side, overlooking a large, no-longer-extant pool with cracked retaining walls (fig. 11). The paired pavilions are also seen in the views of the Topkapı Palace included in the Austrian Habsburg and Dryden Albums (figs. 13 and 14[a and b]). With each featuring a prominent projecting bay window, the two imposing pavilions at the far right side of these panoramic views are situated in the section of the outer garden that extends between Hagia Irene and the sea walls behind the Shore Kiosk. The pyramidal-roofed building in the far right is the Ottoman-style pavilion. Its Persianate companion to the left has a similar roof, now removed, which was added later on as a protective outer cover over the small dome, which rests on a flat terrace.66

Also supplied by the outer garden’s water tower was the last fountain listed in our document: the “fountain of the Mansion/Palace” (çeşme-i maḥall), probably referring to a third palatial structure known to have existed in the vicinity of the previous two garden pavilions, a less likely candidate being the Harem quarters. Angiolillo describes the three monumental garden pavilions—all built for Mehmed II—as “palaces” (palazzi), and differentiates them from the Byzantine churches (chiesiole), with which they shared the outer garden:

Around the palace complex is a garden that embraces all three courts mentioned above ..... In this garden are some small, vaulted [domed] churches (chiesiole), and the Grand Turk has had one of them, which is decorated in mosaic, repaired. And in this garden there are three palaces (Palazzi) about a stone’s throw from one another, and they are built in various modes. One is built in the Persian mode (alla Persiana), decorated in the mode of the country of Karaman, and is covered with wattle and daub; the second is built in the Turkish mode (alla Turchesca); the third in the Greek mode (alla Greca), covered with lead.67
Fig. 14. a) View of the Topkapı Palace from the Golden Horn, ca. late 1590s; b) detail showing the Shore Kiosk (Yalı Köşkü), Tile Palace (Çinili Köşk), and Ottoman-style Pavilion. From the Dryden Album, late 1590s. Cambridge, Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.23, fol. 54r. (Photo: courtesy of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge)
Grouped together, these stylistically distinguished pavilions represented the three kingdoms—Karamanid, Ottoman, and Byzantine—united in Mehmed II's empire. Of the trio, only the Persianate Çinili Kiosk has survived. All three pavilions are clearly visible on the Vavassore map, in the section of the outer garden that faces the Golden Horn (fig. 5). To the left of the domed alla Persiana pavilion is the alla Turchesca pavilion with its pyramidal roof. If the cluster of buildings close to the sea wall on the right side of the Tile Palace is the palazzo Angioletto characterizes as alla Greca, it may have been built in a manner reminiscent of a Byzantine monastery. The Vavassore map identifies this complex as “Tennu,” meaning prison; a prison known as the Chief Gardener’s Gazebo (bostancba çarçaği) once stood near this area.68 At the Seraglio Point (the tip of the triangular promontory), the map depicts the monastic Church of St. Demetrius (S. Demetri), which is seen in the same spot on the Buondelmonti map. This was a mosaic-decorated church and monastery complex, transformed into a dormitory for the Corps of Royal Gardeners and later replaced by a modern medical school (figs. 5 and 6). The rectangular complex with a central courtyard is represented in the double-page Hünernâme painting near the left margin of the page on the right, where it is identified as the “Dormitory of Gardeners” (bostancılar odası) (figs. 2a [47, 48], and 11). Perhaps the small domed church (chiesole) decorated in mosaic that Angioletto says was repaired by Mehmed II belonged to this dormitory, which complemented the three Palazzi he built close to one another in the outer garden.69

Because the Buondelmonti map is drawn from the Marmara side, it does not include all three pavilions. Instead, it shows two domed churches near the Seraglio Point, labeled “S. demetri[us]” and “S. Paulus.” It may be that the palazzo in the Greek style incorporated the remains of the Church of St. Paulus, sited approximately where the cluster of buildings labeled Tennu is shown in the Vavassore map. I suggested above that the third palatial garden structure mentioned by Angioletto was probably the one that our document calls the “Mansion/Palace” (mahall). This building can perhaps be identified with what the French merchant Jean-Claude Flachat would in 1740 describe as the “old seraglio” (vieux serrail), which had a fine colonnaded portico and mosaics. He explains that it was held by some to be a Constantinian palace, and by others to have been a college under the patronage of the Byzantine emperors. Behind several boathouses lined along the shore, the Austrian Habsburg Album’s view of the Topkapı Palace shows a garden pavilion whose conical roof boasts a gilded crescent, as do the palace’s other royal edifices (figs. 2a [46], and 13). One wonders whether this may have been the palazzo in the outer garden built in the alla Greca mode.70

The siting of Mehmed II’s three pavilions indicates the precedence given to the Golden Horn side of the outer garden, which is densely planted with trees in the Hünernâme painting (fig. 11). The Marmara side, by contrast, is represented without trees, and contained kitchen deports, a waste incinerator, animal pens, an aviary with ponds, and a playing field for equestrian sports.71 Angioletto tells us that in addition to various animals such as deer, foxes, hares, sheep, goats, and cows, which were kept in separate places, this part of the garden also had a marshy lake planted with reeds, where Mehmed II enjoyed shooting the ducks and wild geese that gathered there.72

UNDERGROUND CISTERNS AND OTHER BYZANTINE STRUCTURES

Of the Byzantine substructures included in a map of the precincts of the Topkapı Palace prepared by Hülya Tezcan, it seems that most of those found on the Marmara side of the outer garden were used as storehouses.73 It can be deduced from clues in our document that the five “cellars” (bodrum) listed in it were located on the Golden Horn side; the sultan had ordered these to be used as cisterns for watering the outer garden.

The five cellars are specified as being “outside the fortress gate”; “at the storehouse for wood”; “in front of the gate of the Tile Palace”; “at the Mansion/Palace”; and “under the garden” (table 3). The first cellar is probably the one known to have extended between the palace’s fortress wall and Hagia Sophia. It was to be fed by the water tower “next to the armory,” namely, Hagia Irene, which is labeled “S. elini” on the Buondelmonti map (figs. 2a [10], and 6). The second cellar seems to be an
Table 3. UNDERGROUND CELLARs TO BE USED AS CIS-
TERNS FOR WATERING THE OUTER GARDENS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cellar Type</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Source of Water</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Cellar outside the fortress gate (hişar kapısınının taşrasında bir bodrum)</td>
<td>supplied from the water tower next to the armory.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Cellar at the storehouse of wood (odunlıkda bir bodrum)</td>
<td>supplied from the water tower on the fortress wall.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Cellar in front of the door of the Tile Palace (sırça saray kapısı önünde bir bodrum)</td>
<td>supplied from the water tower on the fortress wall.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Cellar at the Mansion/Palace (mahallde bir bodrum)</td>
<td>supplied from the water tower next to the armory.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Cellar under the garden (bâğ altında bir bodrum)</td>
<td>supplied from the water tower inside the garden.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

L-shaped cistern, shown on Tezcan’s map between the fortress wall and Hagia Irene, under the spot where the storehouse for wood used to stand (fig. 2a [9]). It was to be fed by the water tower “on the fortress wall,” which still exists next to the Imperial Gate (fig. 1). The third cellar might be a square cistern identified in Tezcan’s map beneath the Byzantine substructures supporting the terrace on which the Tile Palace stands. Alternatively, it may have been a cistern in the zone of the court workshops, situated across from the gate of the Tile Palace’s terrace (fig. 2a [11, 12]). The water of this cellar, too, would be supplied from the tower on the fortress wall. Still in this area, the fourth cellar, at the “Mansion/Palace,” was probably within the grounds of the palazzo built in the Greek style. The water tower assigned to feed it was located next to the armory. The fifth cellar, described as being “under the garden,” was to be supplied from the water tower “inside the garden.” This could be the cistern that was revealed when part of the outer garden was turned into Gülhane Park in 1912.

There is no reference in our document to the churches of the outer garden mentioned by Angiolello, which likely had their own sources of water. The Marmara side of the outer garden had several natural water sources, including the Christos Soteros Ayazma (fig. 2a [31]). A little further from St. Demetrius, along the Marmara sea wall, the Buonelmonti map shows the “S. georgius” Church. The remains of this building, which once had a high dome and mosaic revetments, were discovered during excavations around the Byzantine Mangana Palace. Outside the sea wall near that church, the same map depicts an imperial arsenal—darsinale regiu[m]—which may have disappeared when the earthquake of 1509 brought down the Byzantine walls in this area.

Again on the Marmara shore, near the intersection of the palace’s sea and land walls, the Buonelmonti map shows another domed church, labeled “S. maria” (fig. 6). The woodcut published by Schedel appears to confuse this church with that of “S. Geor[g]ius,” which stood in the more northerly Mangana area (fig. 7). The identity of the church—converted by Mehmed II into an aviary comprising several ponds—remains disputed, and it is up to Byzantinists to revisit the question in light of the new information provided by the Buonelmonti map (fig. 2a [37]). It is likely that the water wheel of the “aviary of the imperial palace,” mentioned in Sinan’s 1568–69 water distribution register of the Kırkçeşme and Kağıthane Channels, was located near the converted church.

CONCLUSION

The archival document introduced in this article is among the oldest written sources to shed light on the hydraulic system and early buildings of the Topkapı Palace. Combining the new information contained in it with what we know from late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century sources, the “virtual archaeology” I have here attempted indicates that the palace established by Mehmed II was left largely unchanged during the reign of Bayezid II. As we can gauge also from Angiolello’s detailed description, the overall layout of the palace has to this day remained basically true to its original scheme. That scheme was not, as some have claimed, a haphazardly erected mass of unassuming structures, but an ambitious ensemble whose organization was fully codified in Mehmed II’s Kânûnname. Bayezid II was therefore content to add to it only a few kiosks and the Timber Frame Palace. After the 1509 earthquake,
Bayezid, to quote the chronicler Kemalpaşazade, “did not merely restore that great building to its old form, but he also reinforced and solidified it, rendering it a thousand times stronger than before.” The renovated palace, “the like of which not even the painter of the imagination could depict ... announced and made manifest the full power of the supremely mighty sultan.”

In order to interpret more securely the clues our document provides about the topography of water circulation, waterworks, and now-lost edifices of the Topkapı Palace, it is necessary to undertake additional archival research, as well as surface and sub-surface archaeology. We must not forget in this regard that the palace and its grounds constitute an unmatched archaeological site. Built on the hill of the ancient acropolis of Byzantium as an architectural expression of Mehmed II’s vision of universal empire, the palace complex, comprising terraced gardens surrounded by fortified walls, was a veritable open-air museum. The antiquities that the sultan “collected” here included churches converted for various uses, spoliated columns incorporated into the porticos of the palace’s most prestigious buildings, imperial sarcophagi and baptismal fonts reused as water tanks and fountain troughs, and the Column of the Goths (figs. 2a [26], and 14[a]), which had been erected near Seraglio Point by an emperor to commemorate a Roman victory over the invading Goths.

Sited at the meeting point of two continents (Europe and Asia) and two seas (the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea), the palace complex was an emblem of Mehmed II’s dominion over these lands and waters. The unrivalled promontory that it occupies is astutely labeled “Bizantion” on the Buondelmonti map (fig. 8). Ever since I conducted research for my doctoral dissertation, it has been my hope that all the institutions standing today within the imperial fortress that are not museums would be relocated elsewhere, so that the palace precinct can be turned into a protected zone for archaeological research. I conclude by reiterating my wish that this unique site—so important to the archaeology of both the Ottoman and pre-Ottoman periods—might one day be elucidated by the kind of systematic investigation it deserves.

APPENDIX I: FACSIMILE OF D. 10137, TOPKAPI PALACE MUSEUM ARCHIVE

(Photos: courtesy of Topkapi Palace Museum Archive)
Topkapı Sarayı'nın su işleri ve en eski yapıları, yaklaşık 1509 olarak tarihlendirilmiştir.

1. Şadırvan-ı şaffa, bir lüle, çatma dikkânı terazından
2. Şadırvan, divân-ı hıdıye altından, nim lüle, taşrakası terazidan
3. Şadırvan-ı yeni saray, nim lüle, büyük oda yanındaki terazidan
4. Şadırvan-ı hamam, 3 küt'a, iki lüle, mezkur terazidan
5-7 Şadırvan-ı hamam, bir lüle, taşrakası terazidan
6. Haşine-ı hamam, bir lüle, taşrakası terazidan
7. Çeşme-i ceyhan, bir lüle, taşrakası terazidan
8. Büyük oda önden bir musluq, rub' lüle, büyük oda yanındaki terazidan
9. Haşine ile kılın önden bir musluq, rub' lüle, taşrakası terazidan
10. Çeşme-ı açık, bir lüle, taşrakası terazidan
11. Çeşme-ı hasş matba, nim lüle, hasş matba'da divân-ı hıdıye'den terazidan
12. Çeşme-ı helvaciyan, nim lüle, mezkur terazidan
13. Çeşme-ı mermer köşk, rub' lüle, büyük oda yanındaki terazidan
14. Çeşme-ı sırça saray, rub' lüle, açık çeşmesi terazidan
15. Çeşme-ı sırça saray-ı yanında olan köşk, rub' lüle, bağ içindeki terazidan
16. Çeşme-ı mahall, rub' lüle, bağ içindeki terazidan
17. Kapu önden olan savık, anda şu aksam lüzum gelmez, meger şu sağol olub künkçe şûmayıca anda dağı akar.

APPENDIX II: TRANSLITERATION OF D. 10137, TOPKAPI PALACE MUSEUM ARCHIVE

[Fol. 1b]
Taʾṣīl-i çeşmehâ ve şadırvânhâ ki baʿzî kadınından aḵağel-miṣdûr ve baʿzî soñradan olmuşdur.

[Fol. 2a]
Bu şûayrın baʿzî mahallîne taṣrâ[da]ğı terazîdan ve baʿzî taṣrâ[da]ğı terazîdan çatma saray civârîna bir terazîya varub andan taḵši)m olur, ve baʿzî büyük oda cânîninde bir terazîya varub taḵšî)m olur, ve baʿzî daḥî aḥur çeşmesi civârîna bir terazîya varub taḵšî)m olur. Eger emr-i ʿâli olursa şu yollarına hiç vechîle daḥî olmamayub her makname taksim olacaq şu taşradaki terazîdan taksim olub, Vàʿir terazîlara kīfîyet miḳdâr şu vadûkdan soñra her maḥalle taʿyîn olunan terazîlu terazîsun da taḵšî)m olnub, lülecîlara vaqz' olunsun ki žîk olunan miḳdâr şu daʿîm el-evkât inşâ'allâh her birinde cârî ola. Ve bu taksim ki ʿarz olmusdur, baʿzinda bir lüle ve baʿzinda yarm lüle ve baʿzinda bir lüle olub ki taʿyîn olmusdur. Taşradaki terazîdan aḵan şu on lüle sudur, bu on lüle şuuya ayrucuya ayrucuya terazîlar olub, gûri ikisi bir yire cem' olduğu vakt ne miḳdâr idiği her bîr nazâr oldûca ma'ālim olacaqlayın terazîlar ve lüleler olub, andan soñra taḵšî)m olunur. Mezkûr on lüle şûunî altı lülesi 'acem mi'mâr getîrdîği ve dört lülesi mi'mâr ḥamza getîrdîği ḥâssé şûdur. Saray-ı 'âmirede evvel aḵan ayâzma şuuya idi, şûmî ayâzma şuuya altı lüle miḳdâr şûdur, taʿyîn olunan yîlere kīfîyet etmez, 'arz olandan şûyan meccal görinmez, fermân hažret-i 'âlempanâhunûdûr.

[Fol. 2b]
[1] Ḥiṣâr kapusunuň taṣrasinda bir bodrum, cebeḥâne yanındaki terazîdan
[2] Odunlıḳda, bir bodrum, ḡiṣâr divândarâ terazîdan
[3] Surça saray kapusu önden bir bodrum, ḡiṣâr divândarâ terazîdan
[5] Bâğ altinda bir bodrum, bâğ içindeki terazîdan

Zûqk oran bodrumlar kışın yağmur şuuyyla ve saray gelen şuyla tôlub bâğçaya ḡârc olb aysa gerekdîr deyû buyûrmişdur, emr olunan üzre şûlarda şû zâyûde olduğu vakûtan şûyan vakûtan mezkûrlara şu varmaq muḥâldür.
Description of the fountains and water jet fountains, some of which have been flowing since olden times and some of which were added later.

[1] Water jet fountain of the terrace: one lüle from the water tower next to the Timber Frame [Palace].
[3] Water jet fountain under the throne hall: half a lüle from the outside water tower.
[4] Water jet fountain of the New Palace: half a lüle from the water tower next to the Large Chamber.
[5–7] Water jet fountain[s] of the bath, 3 in number: two lüles from the same water tower.
[8] Reservoir of the bath: one lüle from the outside water tower.
[9] Fountain of the gazebo: one lüle from the outside water tower.
[10] A faucet in front of the Large Chamber: a quarter lüle from the water tower next to the Large Chamber.
[12] Fountain of the stables: one lüle from the outside water tower.
[13] Fountain of the imperial kitchen: half a lüle from the water tower on the wall of the imperial kitchen.
[14] Fountain of the confectionary: half a lüle from the same water tower.
[15] Fountain of the Marble Kiosk: a quarter lüle from the water tower next to the Large Chamber.
[16] Fountain of the Tile Palace: a quarter lüle from the water tower next to the fountain of the stables.
[17] Fountain of the kiosk next to the Tile Palace: a quarter lüle from the water tower inside the garden.
[18] Fountain of the Mansion/Palace: a quarter lüle from the water tower inside the garden.

Regarding the water distribution cistern in front of the gate, it is not necessary to make [additional] water flow there, for when the water seeps into the ground and overflows the pipe, it flows from there.

Some of this water is [to be] distributed to its location [directly] from the water tower on the outside; and some of it comes from the outside water tower to a water tower in the vicinity of the Timber Frame Palace and is distributed thence; and some of it comes to a water tower in the vicinity of the Large Chamber and is distributed thence; and some of it comes to a water tower in the vicinity of the fountain of the stables and is distributed thence. If approved by the Sublime Command, let there be no intervention whatsoever to the [existing] water channels; let the water be apportioned to each [tower's] distribution chamber (maksem) from the outside water tower, and after sufficient water has reached the other water towers, it should be distributed from those water towers to each appointed place. And small lüle pipes should be installed so that, God willing, the aforesaid quantity of water continually flows through each of them. And in this distribution [system], which has been petitioned, some [places] have been apportioned full lüles, some half lüles, and others quarter lüles. [In sum:] the water flowing from the outside water tower measures ten lüles; for these ten lüles of water, there are separate water towers; and when two [lüles] of water collect in the same place, in order to know the amount whenever one takes a look, there are water towers and lüle spouts from which the water is distributed. Of these said ten lüles of imperial water, six lüles is the water brought by the architect ʿAcem ʿAli, and four lüles by the architect Hamza. The ayāzma water was what previously flowed to the imperial palace. Now this ayāzma water is a quantity of water measuring six lüles; it is no longer sufficient for the designated places. There appears to be no possibility other than what is petitioned [here]. The command is His Majesty’s, the Refuge of the Universe, to make.
[fol. 2b]

[A] A cellar outside the fortress gate, from the water tower next to the armory.

[B] A cellar at the storehouse for wood, from the water tower on the fortress wall.

[C] A cellar in front of the gate of the Tile Palace, from the water tower on the fortress wall.

[D] A cellar at the Mansion/Palace, from the water tower next to the armory.

[E] A cellar under the garden, from the water tower inside the garden.

It has been ordered that the aforesaid cellars, which are to be filled with rainwater in winter and with the water brought to the palace, must be used for the garden. [But] except in winter when water is plentiful, it is impossible at other times for water to collect in them as ordered.
NOTES

Author’s note: My acquaintance with Dr. Filiz Çağman goes back to the early 1980s, when I was conducting research for my doctoral dissertation on the Topkapı Palace. Discussing my ideas with her as I pored over manuscripts in the palace library proved to be highly inspirational to me. It is therefore particularly appropriate to dedicate to her this article on an archival source regarding the Topkapı Palace. Presented as a paper at the “International Symposium in Honor of Dr. Filiz Çağman: The Topkapı Palace and Ottoman Art” (Topkapı Palace Museum, February 7, 2005), the Turkish version of my article was submitted that year for publication in her festschrift. Since that publication has been delayed, I decided to include the article in this *Mugarnas* volume. I am grateful to Ünver Rüstem for translating it into English. While editing his excellent translation, I have added some new observations and updated several endnotes.

1. The book that resulted from my dissertation (completed at Harvard University in 1986) will be cited repeatedly for the more detailed information and references it gives regarding the structures mentioned in the main text of this article: Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1991). The two plans of the palace (fig. 2[a–b]) included in this article are reproduced from my book, without changing their numbering system, so that cross-references to the book can be more easily followed. In the revised Turkish edition of the book, I included some observations based on the archival document published here: 15. ve 16. Yüzyıllarda Topkapı Saray: Mimari, Tören ve İktidar (Istanbul, 2007).

2. This document is published in Kasım Çeçen, *Mimar Sinan ve Kırkçeşme Tesileleri* (Istanbul, 1988), 165–69, where it is noted, on the basis of Tursun Bey’s history, that Mehmed II restored the Kırkçeşme line. See also Kasım Çeçen and Celâl Kolay, *Topkapı Sarayına Su Sağlayan İsale Hatları* (Istanbul, 1997). For a working drawing of the Kırkçeşme water distribution system, executed by Sinan, and an annotated topographic painting of this system, identifying its “ancient” and new sections in Seyyid Lokman’s Persian Tārīkh-i Sultan Sulayman (History of Sultan Süleyman), dated 1579—Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ms. T. 413, fols. 22v–23r—see Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London and Princeton, N.J., 2005; 2nd ed., London, 2011), 113–14, 140–42, 171–72. For the two copies of the map (Fatih Millet Library, no. 930; and Topkapı Palace Museum Archive [henceforth TSMA], E. 1248), see Kasım Çeçen, *İstanbul’un Vakıf Sularından Halkalı Sular* (Istanbul, 1991), 37–39, maps 1 and 2. An aqueduct has the following inscription above it: “This is the large aqueduct, which has conveyed the water of the Imperial Palace since the time of His Majesty Sultan Mehmed Khan, may he rest in peace” (Büyük kemerdür ki merhûm Sultan Mehmed Hân tâbe serâhu hâzâretleri zamanından beri sarây-ı âmireleri suyu üstünden câridûr). See Aygen Bilge, “Fatih Zamanında Topkapı Sarayını Suyu,” *Türk Sanatı Tarihine Araştırmalar ve İncelemeleri* 2 (1969): 217. Believed to be the remnant of a pre-Ottoman system, the aqueduct in question, which Mehmed II restored, is the Mazul Aqueduct. It carried waters from the Halkalı springs to the Aqueduct of Valens; see Çeçen and Kolay, *Topkapı Sarayına Su Sağlayan İsale Hatları*, 28–30.

3. These maps at the Topkapı Palace Museum Library (henceforth TSMK), dated 1016 (TSMK, H. 1816) and 1817 (TSMK, H. 1815), are published in Çeçen, *İstanbul’un Vakıf Sularından Halkalı Sular*, 39–46, maps 3 and 4. The Halkalı Channel comprises sixteen separate branches: Fatih, Turnucluk, Mahmud Paşa, Bayezid, Koca Mustafa Paşa, Suleymaniye, Mihrimah, Ebusuud, Koprülü, Cerrah Paşa, Sultan Ahmed, Saray Çeşmeleri, Mıri (Imperial), Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa, Kasım Ağa, and Nuruosmaniye. Two main lines of aqueducts carried water to pre-Ottoman Constantinople. The second-century Aqueduct of Hadrian, fed by water sources close to the city (near Çebeci Köyü) and later extended to the Begrade forest, probably entered the city’s land walls near the Kırkçeşme distribution center outside Eğrikapı by the Golden Horn. Running parallel to the Golden Horn, this channel supplied water to lower areas, especially the Great Palace abutting the Hippodrome and neighboring public baths. This water collected in Justinian’s sixteenth-century Basilica Cistern (Yerebatan Sarayı). The fourth-century Aqueduct of Valens (Bozdoğan Kemerı), expanded in the fifth century, was supplied from distant springs in Thrace and the closer Halkalı springs. It brought water to higher areas in the city (including the Forum of Theodosius), and its terminal point was the Binbirdirek Cistern. The Hadianic line partly corresponded to the Ottoman Kırkçeşme system (supplying lower areas). The Aqueduct of Valens, which ceased to carry long-distance waters after the twelfth century, served the Halkalı system (supplying higher areas) in the Ottoman period. See James Crow, “Water and the Great Palace in Constantinople,” in *The Byzantine Court: Source of Power and Culture. Papers from the Second International Sevgi Gönül Symposium, June 2010*, eds. N. Necipoğlu, A. Ödekan, and E. Akyürek (Istanbul, 2013); J. Crow, J. Bardill, and R. Bayliss, *The Water Supply of Byzantine Constantinople* (London, 2008). See n. 26 below for the Ottoman-period Kırkçeşme and Halkalı Channels. For sources on this architect’s constructions at the palace between 1525 and 1529, see Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power*, 23, 79–82, 98–100, 194–98, 259–62 (Appendix A).

4. For sources on this architect’s constructions serving Bayezid II, held the post of chief of water channels (ser- râh-ıдоб) in 917 (1511): see Rüfki Melul Meriç, *Bayezid Câmiî Mimar: 2. Sultan Bayezid DervÎ Mimarlarî ile Bazî Binalarî; Bayezid Câmiî ile Alâkâsî Hüsussâr, Sanatîkârlar ve Eserleri* (Ankara, 1958), 27. The repairs made to the water channels of the Topkapı Palace between 1909 and 1920 (1610–11) were recorded in a register prepared by Hasan, the superintendent (nâzîr) of water channels, and presented to...
Osman Agha, the palace agha; see Istanbul, TSMA, E. 7257. Another palace agha, Kemaneş Mustafa, wrote on the 1607 map of the Halkalı Channel that a new water source had been found at the command of Ahmed I: see Çeçen, Istanbul’un Vakıf Sularından Halkalı Suları, 40.

According to the 1607 map, via its imperial (mûrî) branch the Halkalı Channel supplied the Topkapı Palace with four lüles, one kamış, and one maşura's worth of water (the kamış and maşura are smaller measures than the lüle). We learn from the 1748 map of the Halkalı Channel that the addition of new water sources had increased this quantity to five lüles and one maşura. See Çeçen and Kolay, Topkapı Sarayıya Su Sağlayan İsole Hatları, 37, 48. Sinan’s 1568–69 water distribution register shows that the Kırkçeşme Channel was providing the palace with six lüles, three kamış, and one maşura of water; see Çeçen, Mimar Sinan ve Kırkçeşme Tesilileri, 165–69. Based on these figures, the overall amount of water coming to the palace from the Halkalı and Kırkçeşme Channels was close to the ten lüles—four and six combined—outlined by our document. For the view that both the Halkalı and Kırkçeşme Channels had conducted water to the Topkapı Palace since Mehmed II’s reign, see Bilge, “Fatih’un Zamanında Topkapı Sarayı Suyu,” 216, 218. Our document seems to imply that only the ayâzma water (measuring six lüles) may have supplied the Topkapı Palace before Bayezid II increased this amount to ten lüles of piped water, carried by two channels.

“Ve Sultan-i Rûm Sultan Bâyezîd-i ıki asl Judde sarâyalarlardır, hic haṭa olmayub Allâhu Ta’alâ suklâyub beklede; amma içeri hâmâm vád var idi, anda ba’ızı derzler ızhar olds, girü berktüddiler.” When the sultan, who had left Istanbul for Edirne on 9 Rajab 915 (October 23, 1509), returned to the capital on 27 Shawwal (February 7, 1510), “the Timber Frame Houses were completed; the sovereign entered the capital on 27 Shawwal (February 7, 1510), “the Timber Frame Palace built in 1509: see Giovantonio Menavino, I cinque libri della legge, religione, et vita de’ Turchi (Flor-
19. Aydın İ. Yüksel, Osmanlı Mimârîsinde Kânûnî Sultan Süleyman Devri (926–974/1520–1566): İstanbul (İstanbul, 2004), 9, and also 9–16. For the view that I share with Yüksel, and arrived at before the publication of his 2004 book, see Necipoğlu, Age of Sinan, 155. In a study that came to my attention after submitting the Turkish version of this article in 2005 for publication in Dr. Filiz Çağman’s festschrift, the late Stefanos Yerasimos independently reached the same conclusion. See his article “15. ve 16. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Devri’nde Mimarlık ve Sanat Tarihi Yazdalar,” ed. Aygül Ağır, Deniz Mazlum, and Gül Cephanecigil (İstanbul, 2005), 37–62, esp. 41.

20. These masters are listed in TSMA, E. 9784.

21. See Necipoğlu, Age of Sinan, 155.

22. For the claim that he was an Azeri Turk, as well as a detailed bibliography, see Özkan Ertaş, Türkiye Dışarı Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (İstanbul, 1988–), s.v. “Acem Ali.” For the Armenian identity of Ya’qub Şah, and for his nephew, see Necipoğlu, Age of Sinan, 130, 153.

23. See Necipoğlu, Age of Sinan, 155.

24. For Sinan’s waterworks and the expertise of Ottoman chief architects in wage registers from the 1520s and 1530s are recorded in Necipoğlu, Age of Sinan, Appendix 4.2 on p. 563.

25. For the reference in the waqfyâ, see Halim Bağlı Kunter, “Mimar Ali Bey’in Bilinmeyen İki Vakfiyesi,” in Topkapı Sarayına Su Sağlayan İsale Hatları, 61, 69. The names of architects in wage registers from the 1520s and 1530s are recorded in Necipoğlu, Age of Sinan, Appendix 4.2 on p. 563.

26. The Kırkçeşme waters, which came from dams and streams that were subject to pollution, could only supply places of low altitude. The Halkalı waters, on the other hand, originated in clean underground springs and were conveyed via the Aqueduct of Valens and various water towers to higher locations. See Çeçen and Kolay, Topkapı Sarayına Su Sağlayan İsale Hatları, 6–66. For the aqueducts of Hadrian (supplying water to lower areas) and of Valens (distributing water to higher areas) in the Byzantine period, see n. 3 above.

27. “It is impossible to determine the original form” of this much-altered water tower, though “some of the pipes embedded in the wall are very likely original”: ibid., 48, 59, 70–72. On the 1607 map of Halkalı Channel, it is described as “the water tower on the inner face of the Imperial Gate” (bâb-i himâyânın iç yüzindeki terâzîdâr): ibid., 33. The 1748 Halkalı Channel map, meanwhile, includes a water tower-like structure on the fortress wall to the left of the Imperial Gate, labeled “water tower” (terâzî) as well as “water distribution chamber” (maḳsem) (fig. 1): ibid., 48 (nos. 135–37).

28. Çeçen and Kolay, Topkapı Sarayına Su Sağlayan İsale Hatları, cited in the preceding note, does not include a water tower near the Hagia Irene. For the two wells, see n. 84 below.

29. There is a sacred spring (ayâzma) in the vicinity of the Cold Fountain Gate, outside the palace fortress, by the door next to the Iron Gate. Formerly associated with the Church of St. Therapon, the curative waters of this spring are today in a well reached by stairs. “It is found at the foot of the wall after passing the Iron Gate and before reaching the second, side door (the Sokollu Gate)”: see Hülya Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayı ve Çevresinin Bizans Devri Arkeolojisi (İstanbul, 1989), 115–16.

30. For the three depots at the Tower Pavilion, see Çeçen and Kolay, Topkapı Sarayına Su Sağlayan İsale Hatları, 61, 69. It is hoped that the results of new archaeological explorations, which have located water channels and an “unknown room related to the channels” under the Harem, will shed more light on the position of the water tower “next to the Timber Frame Palace”: see n. 84 below.

31. For the plan and elevation of this structure as it currently stands, see ibid., 72–73.

32. “Bâbâ’ssa’ade kurbaninde gümüş ta’bir olanın su maḳâsemi”.


34. For the fountain of the stables, see Bilge, “Fatih Zamanında Topkapı Sarayı Suyu,” 118, 220 (figs. 4 and 5). According to Sinan’s distribution register of 1568–69, the water that the Kırkçeşme Channel brought to the Topkapı Palace was handled by a “new water wheel” (dolab-ti cedid) and by three other wheels in the outer garden. I have proposed probable locations for the other three water wheels in n. 81 below. For the Corps of the Water Wheel, the two wells, and Sinan’s new water wheel, see Çeçen and Kolay, Topkapı Sarayına Su Sağlayan İsale Hatları, 6–66, 74–76; and Çeçen, Mimar Sinan ve Kırkçeşme Tesisleri, 165–69, 178–80. On the recent discovery of the channel connecting the two wells and another channel extending from those wells toward the Marmara side of the outer garden, see n. 84 below. In his autobiography, titled Tezkiretü-l-Bünyân, Sinan describes his discovery of an ancient water well in a royal garden of Sultan Süleyman; this is generally mis-identified as one of the step-wells in the Topkapı Palace’s Corps of the Water Wheel, a mistake I repeated in my own book: Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 50. The well discovered by Sinan was actually in the suburban royal garden that once belonged to Iskender Çelebi: see Gülrü Necipoğlu, “Preface: Sources, Themes, and Cultural Associations of Sinan’s Autobiographies,” in Sinan’s Autobiographies: Five Sixteenth-Century Texts, ed. Howard Crane and Esra Akin (Leiden, 2006), xiii, 127.
35. For the chronology of the construction of the Privy Chamber complex and its marble terrace, see Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial and Power, 141–42, 286n102.

36. Giovanni Maria Angiolello, Di Gio. Maria Angiolello e di un suo inedito manoscritto, ed. A. Caparozzo (Vicenza, 1881), 22–24. The water supplied to the infirmary, which was built by Sultan Süleyman, came from the water tower next to the Imperial Gate, as recorded on both the 1607 and 1748 maps of the Halkalı Channel. The bakery’s water supply—shown only on the 1748 map—came instead from the water tower of the Middle Gate (which seems to be the outside tower of our document). An extant water tower in the middle of the curtain wall on the right-hand side of the first court was built in the nineteenth century. See Çeçen and Kolay, Topkapı Sarayına Su Sağlayan Isale Hatları, 33 (no. 105), 49 (nos. 126, 130, and 141), 67. Our document makes no mention of two freestanding fountains that are depicted on the left-hand sides of the first and second courts in manuscript paintings from Süleyman’s reign onwards; the 1748 map indicates that these too received their water from the water tower next to the Middle Gate.


39. For the chronology of the construction of the Privy Chamber complex and its marble terrace, see Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 141–58, 183–200. Remains of an older and larger pool have been found under the pool that currently occupies the terrace: see Sedat Hakkı Eldem and Feridun Akozan, Topkapı Sarayı: Bir Mimari Araştırma, 377, figs. 545 and 546. For Mehmed II’s familiarity with and patronage of Italian Renaissance art, and additional bibliography, see Gülru Necipoğlu, “Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation: Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II’s Constantinople,” Muqarnas 29 (2012): 1–81.


41. For the hypothetical location of the crystal kiosk and further descriptions of it, see Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 192–94.

42. Hülya Tezcan dates the bowl of the fountain to the fourth century and also considers the marble basin beneath to be antique: see Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayları, 377, figs. 545 and 546. For Mehmed II’s familiarity with and patronage of Italian Renaissance art, and additional bibliography, see Gülru Necipoğlu, “Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation: Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II’s Constantinople,” Muqarnas 29 (2012): 1–81.

43. Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 184–89.


47. On the Column of Theodosius I (r. 379–95), see G. Becatti, La Colonna coclide istoriata: Problemi storici, iconografici, stilistici (Rome, 1960). The French antiquarian Pierre Gilles, who was in Istanbul between 1544 and 1547, and again in 1550, reports that this monumental column had been dismantled “more than forty years before,” for the construction of Bayezid II’s bath (i.e., ca. 1504 or earlier): See Pierre Gilles’ Constantinople: A Modern English Translation with Commentary, trans. Kimberly Byrd (New York, 2008), 150–51. The bath was built around 1505–8, rather than in 1547, after the death of Bayezid (d. 1512), as is generally assumed: See Semavi Eyice, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi, s.v. “Bayezıt Hamami.” For the argument that it was Bayezid II who dismantled the Column of Theodosius I, as opposed to its having been destroyed in a cyclone in 1547, see Necipoğlu, “Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II’s Constantinople,” 26–27, 69–70n23.

In his description of the imperial treasury, the seventeenth-century traveler Jean-Baptiste Tavernier states that the ceiling of its portico has "excellent paintings in mosaic that represent diverse personages, and that are believed to have been made for the reception of some great prince in the time of the Greek Emperors." He goes on to say that only the personages' bodies survived, the human faces having been effaced because of the Turks' opposition to figurative images. See Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayı, 18, and Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 137. Tavernier furthermore believed that the portico had once been open on both sides, though the structure is clearly of a piece with the rest of the pavilion, sharing as it does the round arches and composite Ionic capitals of the loggia. The portico's original ceiling was entirely removed in the course of a restoration carried out in 1944. As well as housing Mehmed's library and treasuries comprising both Eastern and Western objects, the imperial treasury also preserved various Byzantine relics: see Tezcan, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 133–41. The basement, known as the Underground Treasury (bodrum ğazınesi), includes a Byzantine baptismery whose quatrefoil marble basin was used by the Ottomans for storing gold coins: see Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayı, 104–12.

The sultan's imperial vision is interpreted in Necipoğlu, "Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II's Constantinople," 1–81.

The oral tradition, mentioned by the nineteenth-century Ottoman historian 'Ata, is cited in Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 134.

The Treasury-Bath complex was twice restored, following the earthquake of 1556–57 and the fire of 1574. It may have been in the course of these repairs that the portico and loggia were walled in, if not earlier during Bayezid II's reign, following the damage done to this building in the 1599 earthquake. In 1555, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, the ambassador of the Holy Roman Emperor, referred to a new treasury hall that Rüstem Pasha had added to the building: see Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 129, 138–39.

Ibid., 124–33, fig. 75.

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50. For the unconvincing argument that the columns with classicizing capitals were added in the eighteenth century, see Uğur Tanyeli, "Topkapı Sarayı Üçüncü Avlusun'ndaki Fatih Köşkü (Hazine) ve Tarihsel Evrimi Üzerine Gözlemeler," Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Yıllık 4 (1990): 150–207. The composite Ionic capitals differ in style from their eighteenth-century "Ottoman Baroque" counterparts. Moreover, the marble blocks of the matching half-capitals at each end of the courtyard and loggia arcades are clearly incorporated into the original wall fabric. The loggia and courtyard portico remained walled in between the sixteenth century and modern renovations (see n. 54 below); thus, there would have been no incentive or possibility in the eighteenth century to add lavish colonnades to a building that was locked up as a treasury. Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi correctly interpreted the columns as belonging to Mehmed II's original building: see his Fatih Devri Mimarisi (İstanbul, 1953), 336–39. This judgment is repeated in Eldem and Akozan, Topkapı Sarayı: Bir Mimari Araştırma, 75–77.

In his description of the imperial treasury, the seventeenth-century traveler Jean-Baptiste Tavernier states that the ceiling of its portico has "excellent paintings in mosaic that represent diverse personages, and that are believed to have been made for the reception of some great prince in the time of the Greek Emperors." He goes on to say that only the personages' bodies survived, the human faces having been effaced because of the Turks' opposition to figurative images. See Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayı, 18, and Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 137. Tavernier furthermore believed that the portico had once been open on both sides, though the structure is clearly of a piece with the rest of the pavilion, sharing as it does the round arches and composite Ionic capitals of the loggia. The portico's original ceiling was entirely removed in the course of a restoration carried out in 1944. As well as housing Mehmed's library and treasuries comprising both Eastern and Western objects, the imperial treasury also preserved various Byzantine relics: see Tezcan, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 133–41. The basement, known as the Underground Treasury (bodrum ğazınesi), includes a Byzantine baptismery whose quatrefoil marble basin was used by the Ottomans for storing gold coins: see Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayı, 104–12.

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Ibid., 124–33, fig. 75.


57. For the Large Chamber and dormitories of the treasury and pantry pages, see Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 111–20.

58. Özcan, "Fatih’ın Teşkilat Kanunnamesi," 42. Mehmed II's Chamber of Petitions was replaced in the 1520s by that of Sultan Süleyman, which is still extant: see Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 19–21, 96–110.


60. For the fountain of the stables, see n. 34 above. The 1607 map of the Halkalı Channel reveals that the water tower to the left of the Middle Gate (which I have hypothetically identified as the outside tower of our document) supplied three maṣura to the imperial stables (ḥāṣṣ aḫur), as well as one to the chamber of halberdiers (teberdārlar odası); the latter structures were added during Sultan Süleyman's reign: see Çeçen and Kolay, Topkapı Sarayına Su Sağlayan İsale Hatları, 33 (nos. 108 and 109). The 1748 map records the waters distributed by the same water tower to two free-standing fountains on the left sides of the first and second courts, as well as to the buildings along the left side of the second court (bāb-i sulṭān, ḵoz beḵčer, zülüflü teberdārān). Since there is no water channel connected to the kitchens in this map, their water supply probably came from the neighboring two wells of the Corps of the Water Wheel, fed by the Kırkçeşme waters, in the far right corner of the first court: see n. 34 above, and Çeçen and Kolay, Topkapı Sarayına Su Sağlayan İsale Hatları, 48 (nos. 138, 143–46).

61. For the Ishıkay Kiosk, see Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 217–18.

62. For the basement of the rectangular pavilion, see Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 98–200; and Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayı, 109–10.

63. In Melchior Lorichs' panorama (1559–60s), the original shore kiosk of Bayezid II is labeled "das lusthauß des Kaisers": see Eugen Oberhummer, Konstantinopel unter Sultan Suleiman dem Grossen, aufgenommen im Jahre 1559 durch Melchior Lorichs aus Flensburg (Munich, 1902), 10, pl. 3; Cyril Mango and Stephan Yerasimos, Melchior Lorichs' Panorama of Istanbul, 1559 (Bern, 1999), 8 (sheet 3). The two shore kiosks that successively replaced that of Bayezid II are discussed in Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 231–40. I am grateful to Mr. Sandy Paul, Sub-Librar-
ian of Trinity College Library, who showed me the Dryden Album (Ms. R.14.23) during my stay in Cambridge in March 2013, and for providing the digital images of the painting, as well as the permission to publish it.

64. For the Çinili Köşk and a wall fountain inside one of its halls, which features a renovation inscription dated 1590–91, see Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 210–17; Menavino, I cinque libri, 90; Tursun Beg, History of Mehmed the Conqueror by Tursun Beg, facsimile edition with introduction by Halil Inalcik and Rhoads Murphey (Minneapolis and Chicago, 1978), fols. 58r, and 59r–v.

65. Tursun Beg’s description shows that the two pavilions stood in the outer garden that extended between the fortress wall and the main core of the palace complex: see Tursun Beg, History of Mehmed the Conqueror, fols. 58r, 59r–v. For the Byzantine substructure of the Museum of the Ancient Near East, see Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayi, 25. The buildings are discussed in Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 210–12; and, more recently, in Necipoğlu, “Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II’s Constantinople,” 25–30, 33–34.

66. The two garden kiosks are also seen in Melchior Lorichs, Panorama of Istanbul, ca. 1559–60s: Leiden University Library, Ms. Cod. 1758, reproduced in Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, pls. 25d–e.

67. The term “mahall” is used for the women’s quarters in Mughal palaces. Hence, the water tower in the outer garden that supplied the “fountain of the Mansion/Palace” could be associated with the Harem quarters. A celler under this edifice was supplied by the water tower next to the armory (i.e., Hagia Irene): Angiolello, Di Gio. Maria Angiolello, 24; discussed in Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 210–17, 298n1; and Necipoğlu, “Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II’s Constantinople,” 25–30, 33–34.

68. For the prison, see Jean-Claude Flachat, Observations sur le commerce et sur les arts d’une partie de l’Europe, de l’Asie, de l’Afrique, et même des Indes Orientales, 2 vols. (Lyons, 1766–67), 2:209, 211, cited in Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 207, 297n120. It seems less likely that the structure described by Flachat is the church and monastery of St. Demetrius, on Seraglio Point. This monastic complex, used as the dormitory of the Corps of Royal Gardeners, was not so close to the alla Persiana and alla Turchesca pavilions. Mehmed II’s three garden pavilions were a stone’s throw from one another, according to Angiolello.

69. For the church of “S. Paulus,” see Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayi, 70–74. Giovanni Battista Donato, who saw this ruined church with its mosaics in 1681, wrote that the palace gardeners resided there: see Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 207.

70. For the Church of “S. Paulus,” see Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayi, 70. On the college associated with this church, see R. Browning, “The Patriarchal School at Constantinople in the Twelfth Century,” Byzantion: Revue Internationale des Études Byzantines 32, 1 (1962): 167–202. Flachat, Observations sur le commerce, 2210, cited in Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial and Power, 207, 297n120. It seems less likely that the structure described by Flachat is the church and monastery of St. Demetrius, on Seraglio Point. This monastic complex, used as the dormitory of the Corps of Royal Gardeners, was not so close to the alla Persiana and alla Turchesca pavilions. Mehmed II’s three garden pavilions were a stone’s throw from one another, according to Angiolello.

71. The various sections and structures of the outer garden are described in Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 200–41.


73. For the cisterns and cellars in the palace grounds, see the topographic map of the Topkapı Palace and descriptions of these Byzantine structures in Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayi, 187–240. Tezcan recorded about forty-two wells and cisterns on the grounds of the Topkapı Palace.

74. Ibid., 231–33. I find it likely that the cellar “outside the fortress gate” may have been located under the “imperial storehouse” (mīr anbar), near the madrasa of the Ayasofya Mosque, which Sinan demolished to widen the street extending between Hagia Sophia and the Topkapı Palace: see Necipoğlu, Age of Sinan, 112. Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayi, 223–24.

75. Cemil Pasha (Topuzlu), who was the city prefect (şehremīni) of Istanbul at the time and the man largely responsible for establishing the park, would describe the discovery of the cistern as follows: “No sooner did we bring down one of these [garden-terrace] walls than the ruins of an old church together with an enormous cistern of ten columns appeared before us” (Bu duvarlardan birini bir gün indirir indirmez önmüze eski bir kilise harabesi ve to süütnlu koca­man bir sarnuç çıktı). According to Wulzinger, this cistern may have been the substructure of a monastery or part of a bath: See Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayi, 226–28.

76. Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayi, 94–99. Some of this holy water flowed from a fountain in the basement of the Pearl Kiosk (Incili Köşk), completed in 1590. According to Tezcan, there was another ayāzma in the same area belonging to the Church of S. Maria Hodegetria: Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayi, 55–61. She identifies the ruins of a hexagonal structure with a marble pool, discovered in the vicinity, as the baptistery of this church. But Berger holds that it belongs to a lost bath: see Albrecht Berger, Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinopoleos, Poikila Byzantina 8 (Bonn, 1988), 376–78.

77. Following the Ottoman conquest of Istanbul, this monastery and church complex was used for a period as a dervish lodge: see Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayi, 78–84; and Berger and Bardill, “Representations of Constantinople,” 21–22. The arsenal seems to have been replaced by the imperial boathouse (kayıkhan-i hāsâ) on the Golden Horn shore of the palace, depicted in Melchior Lorichs’ panorama, ca.
59–60s, where it is annotated as “des Kayser's galahrenheit hauss, mit welcher er spazieren fereth.” See Oberhummer, Konstantinopol, 11 (pl. 4); Mango and Yerasimos, Melchior Lorichs’ Panorama, 8 (sheet 4); Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 207–8. Also see the row of boathouses shown on the shore in the Austrian Habsburg Album’s view of the Topkapı Palace, reproduced in this article (fig. 13), and the plan of the palace precinct (fig. 2a [46]).

80. Of the four water wheels on the palace grounds that are mentioned in Sinan’s water distribution register of the Topkapı Palace’s hydraulic system in 2009, after having analyzed that of the Hagia Sophia in 2005 and 2009. The results of these preliminary investigations on the palace grounds are summarized in Çiğdem Özkan-Aygün, “New Findings on Hagia Sophia Subterranean and Its Surroundings,” Bizantinistica, Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi, Serie Seconda 12 (2010): 57–77. The team discovered channels extending from those wells towards the cisterns and substructures of the Mangana region of the outer garden along the Marmara Sea; as well as two similar huge wells in the courtyard of the Ottoman Mint behind Hagia Irene. The “non-destructive” method employed was “direct survey in the channels and cisterns,” including diving, ibid., 57–59. archaeological investigations in the future, however, need to be accompanied by archival research and scrutiny of written narrative sources.

81. I previously read the inscription on Schedel’s woodcut as “S. Grovus”: see Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 204. Recent alternative readings include “S. Granus” and “Lazarus”; see Frat Düzgünler, Iustinianus Dönemi’nde İstanbul’da Yapılar: Procopius, Birinci Kitap (Istanbul, 2004), 62–63. The correct reading is probably “S. Geor[g]ius,” as proposed in Berger and Bardill, “Representations of Constantinople,” 21–22. Berger and Bardill suggest that the depicted church is that of “St. Lazarus” or St. Michael, arguing that the Monastery of Theotokos Hodegetria to have been within the palace grounds (see n. 77 above).

82. Of the four water wheels on the palace grounds that are mentioned in Sinan’s water distribution register of the Kırkçeşme Channel, only one is indicated as being new: that of the Corps of the Water Wheel in the first court (dolab-i cedid der sarāy-i ʿāmire); see Çeçen and Kolay, Topkapı Sarayına Su Sağlayan İsale Hatları: Procopius, Birinci Kitap (Istanbul, 2004), 62–63. The remaining three wheels were, to my mind, located as follows: that of the “aviary of the imperial palace” (kuşḫāne-i sarāy-i ʿāmire) was, as I argue above in the main text, by the converted church near the intersection of the palace’s land and sea walls on the Marmara side (fig. 2a [37]); that of the “imperial garden” (bāġçe-i ḫāṣṣ) was probably near the dormitory of the Corps of Royal Gardeners on the Golden Horn side (fig. 2a [47]); and that of “His Majesty the Sultan” (dolab-i hażret-i sultan) may have been in the vicinity of the Privy Chamber’s and Harem’s walled private garden terraces. For the Corps of the Aviary, see Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 204.


84. A team of archaeologists led by Dr. Çiğdem Özkan-Aygün of Istanbul Technical University briefly investigated the Topkapı Palace’s hydraulic system in 2009, after having analyzed that of the Hagia Sophia in 2005 and 2009. The results of these preliminary investigations on the palace grounds are summarized in Çiğdem Özkan-Aygün, “New Findings on Hagia Sophia Subterranean and Its Surroundings,” Bizantinistica, Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi, Serie Seconda 12 (2010): 57–77. The team discovered channels under the second courtyard and Harem; the channel connecting the two huge wells of the Corps of the Water Wheel (Dolap Ocağı) in the first courtyard, and another channel extending from those wells towards the cisterns and substructures of the Mangana region of the outer garden along the Marmara Sea; as well as two similar huge wells in the courtyard of the Ottoman Mint behind Hagia Irene. The “non-destructive” method employed was “direct survey in the channels and cisterns,” including diving, ibid., 57–59. Archaeological investigations in the future, however, need to be accompanied by archival research and scrutiny of written narrative sources.

85. For the sarcophagi and other antiquities found at the palace grounds, see Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayı, 251–389.

86. Mehmed II’s conquest of Constantinople and his dominion over the “Two Continents” and “Two Seas” are specified in the palace’s foundation inscription on the Imperial Gate, dated 1478: see Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 34, 36.
The court of Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58) was highly conscious of architecture. Not only are a large number of buildings preserved that were commissioned by the pādshāh, his family, and the nobility, but we also have detailed descriptions in primary sources to match them. This evidence allows us to understand the form, function, and meaning of the buildings, as well as the historical context in which they were created. Besides the great mausoleum project of the Taj Mahal (1632–43/48) and the tomb for his father, Jahangir, at Lahore (1628–38), Shah Jahan’s interest was directed towards palaces and gardens. The palace was a major focus of his urban projects at Agra and Shahjahanabad. The emperor commissioned mosques on a large scale only in his later reign and the madrasa as a building type of its own never played a great role in Mughal India.

Since the middle of the 1970s, I have been engaged in documenting and analyzing all the palaces and gardens of Shah Jahan.1 The large number of preserved buildings and the evidence about them in the primary sources give us unique insights into a building type about which much less is known elsewhere in India and the Islamic world.2

In this paper, I reconsider the audience halls of Shah Jahan. Previously, I discussed the stone halls as we see them today in the Mughal fortress palaces of Agra, Lahore, and Delhi (figs. 1–3), exploring them from the perspective of their design, purpose, and symbolic significance.3 But this left several questions open, and I addressed only briefly the immediate sources of the halls, namely, their wooden precursors, which were constructed by Shah Jahan soon after he came to the Mughal throne on February 14, 1628. The wooden halls represented his first expression of official ceremonial palace architecture and were of considerable importance in the realization of his new program of palace buildings. But they lasted only ten years and by 1637 were replaced by permanent stone halls at Agra and Lahore. In the new palace of Delhi (completed in 1648), a stone hall was built following the same pattern but without a wooden precursor. No trace is left of the wooden halls that are here the subject of my investigation, and their ephemeral nature necessitates a reconstructive exploration of the primary sources. The issue is, indeed, quite complex, since it involves considering the sources on different levels.

I understand these sources in two different ways: first in the conventional manner, as textual records that speak about the inception and development of the halls. And, since I am an art historian, I also devote much attention to the visual records, which confront us with the problem of the representation of the halls in contemporaneous history painting. Second, I understand “source” as a starting point from which to consider where the idea of the wooden halls came from as they appear in Shah Jahani palace architecture.

Lastly, I would like to distinguish “source” from “origin” when I look at how Shah Jahani audience halls became a model of architectural inspiration for the Safavids. An idea that had its origin in the Achaemenid dominions was reformulated at the Mughal court and came to be an incentive for further architectural exploration back in Iran.

I. TEXTUAL SOURCES

In Shah Jahan’s time, we observe the emergence of rich texts on architecture. They do not, however, form a
genre of their own—the Mughals had no written architectural theory. In India one would have expected the Mughals to have become interested in this genre because treatises on art and architecture, the shilpa śāstras and vāstū śāstra, represent an ancient tradition of the subcontinent. It is surprising that the extensive Mughal translation program of Sanskrit texts under Akbar (r. 1556–1605) did not include works of this type—the more so since the Mughals, like the Muslim dynasties before them, continued to absorb Indian traditions into their art and architecture, and even reinvigorated them.

Despite the lack of written evidence, theory was not absent from Mughal architectural thinking, and in Shah Jahan's time we have clear evidence that it was expressed in the buildings themselves, the most telling example being the Taj Mahal.4

**Historiography as a forum for architecture**

Although no theory of architecture was written down, we do have detailed Mughal texts dealing with architecture, namely, descriptions that inform us about the construction history, form, and function of a building. They begin to appear in the official historiography (tārīkh) after the accession of Shah Jahan. These texts are not concerned with how to build, but rather give an assessment of the status quo, of a finished building and its use. They may also describe what a building will look like, a kind of project study, as it were. While these texts have attracted the attention of art historians like Wayne Begley and myself,5 they have largely been ignored by historians and scholars of Indo-Persian literature, since the historiography and poetry produced for Shah Jahan has, in general, received little attention.6

The appearance of architecture in the historiography gives expression to a distinct interest of Shah Jahan. The construction of his own history was one of his driving concerns, the intention being to leave to posterity the image of an ideal ruler and an ideal state. His search for a suitable historian took over ten years, and several candidates were considered for the part, including ʿAbd al-Latif of Gujarat, Hakim ʿAbd al-Haqqi of Fatehpur, Mir Jalal al-Dīn Tabatabaii of Isfahan (d. 1636; commissioned in 1632),7 and Muhammad Amin of Qazvin (d. 1646/47; in imperial service as a munshi since 1632 and commissioned to write the Pādshāhnāma in 1636). Shah Jahan ultimately settled, in about 1638, on ʿAbd al-Hamid Lahawri (d. 1654), an elderly historian from Lahore who by then had retired to Patna.8 The emperor expected him to compose a history that would rival the Akbarnāma, the great historical work that Abu'l Fazl (d. 1602) had created for Shah Jahan's grandfather Akbar. In his Pādshāhnāma Lahawri covered the first twenty-six years of Shah Jahan’s reign, that is, two cycles of ten years and six years of the third cycle. When he had to retire from the task because of his declining health, Muhammad Warith (d. 1680) continued the remaining four years of the third cycle. Muhammad Sadiq Khan (of whom little is yet known) wrote a Shāhjahānnāma/ Tavārīkh-i Shāhjahāni or Pādshāhnāma,9 and Muhammad Salih Kanbo (d. 1674/75) authored the ʿAmal-i ʿAlīh, also called the Shāhjahāchnittāma, a parallel history.10 The circumstances of the last work’s composition are not quite clear, although recent research by Saqib Baburi has suggested that it might also have been an imperial commission. Kanbo’s style is highly panegyrical and metaphorical, which makes him a principal source for establishing the symbolism and program of imperial buildings. He also points out the function of architecture, pomp, and show as an instrument of rule.11 Lastly, there was Chandar Bhan Brahman (d. 1662–63), the munshi and poet who wrote the Chahār Chaman (The Four Gardens). This work, which is difficult to classify, describes, inter alia, activities and ceremonies of Shah Jahan’s court and also contains eulogizing accounts of provinces, cities, and buildings of the Mughal empire.12

**Architecture in poetic works**

There were also the poets Abu Talib Kalim Kashani (d. 1650), Hajji Muhammad Jan Qudsi Mashhadi (d. 1646), and Mir Muhammad Yahya Kashi (d. 1653), who all embarked on the project of a versified Pādshāhnāma in the style of the Shāhnāma of Firdawsī, although none of these versified histories gives a full account of Shah Jahan’s reign.13 The work by Kalim, Shah Jahan’s most eminent poet, covers the ruler’s ancestry and princehood, as well as the first decade of his reign.14 Its descriptions of imperial building projects contain a surprising amount of factual information. Kalim is, for instance, the only one of Shah Jahan’s authors to give us the tech-
Technical details of how the foundations of buildings at Agra, including the Taj Mahal, were laid by means of wells sunk into the sandy terrain of the riverbank.15

Kalim, Qudsi, and Kashi also wrote eulogies of Shah Jahan’s buildings and poetic chronograms on the occasions of their completion. Panegyric poetry with its metaphors and *epitheta ornantia* (specific glorifying phrases repeatedly used for the emperor or his buildings) represents a potential source for establishing the meaning of a building, though as I have pointed out elsewhere, the greatest problem is to recognize which themes and concepts were merely literary conventions and which had a bearing on actual works of art.16

**Epigraphy**

Rounding out the picture was epigraphy (the inscriptions on a building), which may proclaim the program of a structure, as in the case of the Koranic inscriptions of the Taj Mahal, expressing the eschatological concept of the mausoleum.17 Shah Jahani epigraphy was more often written in Persian and provided information, in panegyric terms, about the date of completion, the patron, and the costs involved in constructing the building.18

While descriptions, eulogies of buildings, and epigraphy can be found elsewhere in the Persian-speaking world, the architectural descriptions embedded in Shah Jahan’s histories in prose and verse are in the fullest stage of their development, outstanding in their time with regard to their complete and exact assessment of a building, precise detail, measurements, and consistency in the application of architectural terms.19 A perfect example is the building-by-building description of the Taj Mahal complex on the occasion of its official completion on 17 Dhu ‘l Qa‘da 1052 (February 6, 1643).20 And we have full and detailed accounts of all major Shah Jahani palaces and formal gardens. Only the architectural projects of the emperor were recorded in detail; those of the princes, imperial women, and nobility were merely mentioned, if at all, when they were reported as completed, or when the emperor paid them a visit. Also described were buildings that were built by a member of the imperial family or the nobility for the emperor’s use.

In these descriptions we observe an idiosyncratic use of Persian and Arabic expressions, and an enrichment of the vocabulary, with terms assimilated from Indian languages applied to architectural forms derived from older Indian architecture.21 Shah Jahan wanted to have his architecture—the monument of his reign—recorded in exact terms for posterity; he directed the scientific interest in the visual world, which he had inherited from his predecessors, toward his own artifacts. Babur and Jahangir described the works of nature, the flora and fauna of Hindustan, in long passages in their complex autobiographies; Shah Jahan had his architecture assessed in a corresponding manner through the genre of historiography (*tārīkh*).

**Descriptions of the first wooden audience hall of Agra**

Architectural descriptions of such quality did not appear out of the blue; indeed, they took some time to develop. The first building to which Shah Jahan’s historians and poets directed their efforts was the audience hall that Shah Jahan had built in the palace fortress of Agra soon after his accession in August 1628. Up to this time, a tent (*īvān az parcha*) had been used. The new hall was described as an *īvān* and called *Dawlat Khāna-i Khāṣṣ-ʿAmm*, as well as *Chihil Sutun* (Forty Columns). In Mughal Persian, *īvān* means a pillared construction of any dimension and plan; *dawlat khāna* can be rendered as “house of royal power and authority,” and is used for an imperial palace or palace building; *khāṣṣ*, meaning “the special, the close ones,” referred to the group that represented the highest ranks of the empire; and *ʿāmm* were all the others. *Īvān-i Dawlat Khāna-i Khāṣṣ-ʿAmm* can thus be translated as “State Hall for High and Low,” or “Hall of Public Audience,” while *Īvān-i Chihil Sutun* means “Hall with Forty Columns.”

The Mughals did not use large audience halls before Shah Jahan, and thus his *Dawlat Khāna-i Khass-ʿAmm* (in common language shortened to *Divan-i ʿAmm*), or Chihil Sutun, represented a new type in the Mughal palatial building program. It was described by his historians, who emphasized the emperor’s personal involvement, as an “invention of Shah Jahan.”22 The credit for his buildings, even for their overall concept, had to go to Shah Jahan as the supreme architect, and his advisers and builders were hardly ever recognized. Jahangir acknowledged the role of these behind-the-scenes players, referring to them as *mardum-i sāḥib-i...*
vuqūf—men of superior knowledge—when he mentions how he consulted them in the rebuilding of the tomb of his father, Akbar, at Sikandra, Agra.\textsuperscript{23} Shah Jahan’s “invention” refers, obviously, to the hypostyle construction of a large audience hall, not to the term chihil sutūn. Palace buildings called chihil sutūn appear in Timurid, Safavid, and early Mughal texts. We can assume that they had pillars, though not necessarily forty of them, since the term was mostly used in a generic way. Otherwise, we do not know what they looked like.\textsuperscript{24}

We learn that the purpose of Shah Jahan’s new hall was to provide an architectural frame for the viewing window from which he presided over the general court assembly, the Jharoka-i Khass-u-ʿAmm, in the courtyard, the Sahn-i Dawlat Khana-i Khass-u-ʿAmm, of the palace of Agra, and to give protection to those who took part in the court session. Corresponding halls were built at Lahore and, according to Sadiq Khan, also at Burhanpur in Khandesh, in central India, and in other great cities of the Mughal empire.\textsuperscript{25} We learn further that these audience halls were first built of wood and were later replaced by the stone versions of the Red Fort of Agra (fig. 1), the Fort of Lahore, much altered in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (fig. 2), and the Red Fort of Delhi (fig. 3). Earlier scholars largely ignored the existence of the wooden halls and applied what Shah Jahan’s historians said about them to their later stone replacements.\textsuperscript{26}

Since the wooden audience halls were built at the time when Shah Jahan was trying out various historians, we have descriptions of them from the pens of several authors. Jalal al-Din Tabataba’i begins his history on 28 Sha’ban 1041 (March 20, 1632), with an account of the Nawruz celebration at Burhanpur; the bargāh-i chihil sutūn-i-ʿāmm-u-khāṣṣ (forty-columned audience hall for the wider public and the special ones) features right at the beginning of his account, but he provides no details about it.\textsuperscript{27} The following historians carefully describe
the first wooden hall of Agra, which became the blueprint for the rest, and further mention that the hall at Lahore was built in the same way. Tabataba’i’s successor, Qazvini, refers to the Agra hall as “one of the innovations of Hazrat Sahib-i Qiran-i Thani” in his description of the daily court proceedings, where he explains its function and organization. He gives a separate description of the hall in Dhu ’l Hijja 1037 (August 1628), in his chronologically ordered account of the first year of Shah Jahan’s reign. The official and final description was
that of 'Abd al-Hamid Lahawri, who reported the completion of the hall on 4 Dhu 'l-Hijja 1037 (August 5, 1628). He combined the two descriptions of Qazvini and follows him closely when he writes (see appendix I for a transcription of the following passage):

In the time of the rule of His Majesty Arsh Ashyani [posthumous name of Akbar, r. 1556–1605] and [during] the sultanate of His Majesty Jannat Makani [posthumous name of Jahangir, r. 1605–1627] and after the accession (julis) of His Majesty the World protector (jahân-bân [=Shah Jahan]), up to this date, there was no building in front of the Jharoka-i Khass-u- 'Amm, in which all the servants (jami'-yi bandagân) would receive the honor (dawlat) of audience (bâr) and the bliss of viewing [the pâdshâh], and where the servants of the carpet of his presence (multuzimân-i basât) would get protection from rain and heat. [Merely] an ivân of cloth was put up, as has been mentioned before. As in this auspicious time whatever available means of comfort of world rule (jahân-bânî) through [all] possible efforts have come onto the wide stage [of existence] (ba-mazhar-i fahal) and whatever decoration and adornment of the world have been rushed from the depth of nonexistence (hâzîz-i 'adam) to the zenith of existence (awj-i vujûd), due to the world-adorning order [of the pâdshâh], wonderworking architects (mi'mârân jâdû ā sar) and carpenters, who are in their work like Azar (najîrân-i Azar-kâr), built a lofty hall (ivân-i 'alâ) that raised its head to the planet Saturn and a high building (binâ'-i-rafi') that reached to the lote tree in Paradise (sidrâtu 'l-muntahâ), and it was completed in front of the jharoka (viewing window) of the Dawlat Khana-i Khass-u- 'Amm. In length [it was] 70 gaz and in width 22 gaz pâdshâhi. It was completed in forty days [exactly] in the manner in which it had cast its light in the bright mirror of the mind of His Majesty the world conqueror (gitti-satân). Also, for those who stand in front of the world-ruling throne, it was new protection from rain (lit. water) and sun, and a boundless decoration to the court (bârgâh) as high as heaven. Three sides of this ivân of high foundations have a passage (râhî) from which the high nobles (umarâ) and the ones whose duty is to serve (khidmat-i pishgân) and other close rank holders (mansâbâdârân-i ri-shinâs) come in, and a railing of silver (mahjar az nuqra) has been put up [around it]. In this ivân stand the servants worthy of their rank at the place that has been established for them in the manner suitable to the assemblies of glorious and powerful sultans. Most of them stand with their back facing the railing, and a few that are distinguished by being close [to the emperor] stand adjacent to the two columns (sutân) that frame [lit. are right next to] the jharoka. And the bearers of the qur with golden flags (âlam) and golden emblems (togh) and the imperial qur (qur-i khâss) stand on the left side, with their backs close to the wall. In front of this heaven-like building is a wide courtyard (saḥn), around which is a wooden-colored railing (chûbin-i mahjar-i rangân) on which they spread hangings (sâyabân) of brocaded velvet (makhmal-i zarâbaft). In this place, whoever has a rank (manşab) less than 200 and the personal guard (ahâdi) who are archers (kamân-dâr) and muskeeters (tugfahchâyân) of excellent aim and some of the followers of the umarâ are received at court. At the gates of the Dawlat Khana-i Khass-u- 'Amm and [those] of each of the two railings, reliable mace bearers and supervisors (yusâwulân: masters of ceremonies?) and doorkeepers stand in precious robes. They do not allow access to strangers or anyone whose position is not up to the ranks [entitled to enter inside].

Talib Kalim, the creator of meaningful verses, composed this quatrains in praise of this house of high foundations, and brought it to the most holy attention [of the emperor]. And the skirt of his expectations became heavy with the weight of the imperial reward.

This new building, which is under the same shadow as the throne ('arsh) of God [= is its neighbor in the highest stage of heaven], loftiness is only a word next to the height of its plinth.

It is a garden (bâgh) and each of its green columns is a cypress (sary), so that the repose of high and low (khâss-u-âmm) is under its shadow.

And the holy order had the honor of being issued that at the capital (Dâr al-Saltanat) Lahore, likewise in front of the Jharoka-i Dawlat Khana-i Khass-u- 'Amm, they should construct a high ivân in the same manner.

Then there is Muhammad Salih Kanbo's description of the hall, which I adduce here in the translation of S. M. Yunus Jaffery (see appendix II for a transcription):

Laying the foundation of Chihil Sutun in the courtyard of khâss-u-âmm to give room to high and low, especially those who stand under the shadow of the favor and compassion of his Majesty, near the leg of the throne of Solomon's dignity.

The special favor of the emperor of the world is by the grace of God directed not only towards a particular class or a particular person among the different groups of people and individuals, but as a common necessity has included all living beings, low and high (avâmm-u-
Consequently, the shadow of his benevolence includes the whole world and like the generosity of God, the Self-Existent, covers each and every person. The effects of the spring rain of his beneficence have reached everywhere, in the same way that the beautiful rain of the blessings [of God] has poured not only on the dry and wet [parts of the earth], but also on the sea, as well as on the land. It is for this reason that the emperor has always the blessings [of God] has poured not only on the dry and wet everywhere, in the same way that the beautiful rain of the spring rain of his beneficence have reached the Self-Existent, covers each and every person. The includes the whole world and like the generosity of God, collects means of peace and protection for the people. One royal determination is always busy to prepare designs to the case and the comfort of the people of the world. The of his blessed time passes without him meditating about the hearts of the people; therefore, none of the moments of his blessed time passes without him meditating about the case and the comfort of the people of the world. The royal determination is always busy to prepare designs to collect means of peace and protection for the people. One evidence of this claim is the innovation of the royal audience hall (bārgāh) named Chihil Sutun (Forty Columns), which has recently been built in the spacious courtyard of khāss-u-āmm. The reason for laying the foundation of this building, which is a copy of the seven gardens of King Shaddad (nuska-i sab‘-i Shaddād) and the court of justice and equity (divānkada-i ʿadl-u-dād) and which has drawn a veil on the audience hall of Solomon (bargāh-i Sulaymān) and the Ivān-i Nawshirwān, is that everybody from every direction has hopes of this place of refuge and a large number of the people, with the intention of presenting their requests, come here repeatedly, settling their petitions, and the execution of their requirements and necessities. But there was no shade or shelter [for them], to protect them from the water of rain and the violent heat of the sun. Therefore, due to the exigency of the infinite compassion of the emperor, a farmān (order) running like destiny and bearing the impression of the royal sig-net was issued with the content that: In the great Dar al-Khalīfat [title of Lahore] as well as in most of the big cities of all the provinces of the empire, where royal palaces have been built, and particularly in Dar al-Saltanat Lahawr [title of Lahore], in front of the Jharoka-i Khass-u-ʿAmm, a place where indigent persons successfully fulfill their needs, should be laid the foundations of a hall (ivān) with forty columns (chihil sutān) seventy girā’ [-gaz] long and twenty-two girā’ wide; and it should be completed at once, so that all the attendants of the court, without bearing the trouble of the heat of the sun, might be able to offer their petitions without restraint.

In short, at the royal command, such an audience hall, where dignity takes abode, was built on forty magnificent columns. Its threshold is so high that it has diminished the glory of the Ivan-i Kisra. The base of this sacred monument is so firm that the castles of the Caesar (qasr-i Qaysar), being anxious of its exaltation, became defeated in their foundations. Such a long and wide building with so many pleasant designs and geometrical figures was built within forty days, and it caused amazement for spectators.

Verses (abyāt):

During the reign of Sahib Qiran-i Thani, the world is so well furnished, as never before in the last hundred centuries. A magnificent building has been raised on forty columns, and it is more upright than the mountain Bisutun.

When this building glitters in the ruddy crepuscule, the sky out of envy sinks up to his waist into blood.

When this cheerful building was completed in every respect and came into being in its full form, the astronomers (akhtar shumārān) and astrolabe-consulting persons chose the day of 25 Dhu’l Hīja 1037 (August 25, 1628) as an auspicious time that was free from ill fate. The emperor of this heaven-like court, after 20 ghari [of this day] had passed, entered this paradisiacal assembly, decorated with various things of adornment and beauty, and sat on the throne of fortune and put on the crown of dignity and splendor. By giving a general audience at this special court (bārgāh-i khāss), he praised with his thank-paying tongue the creator of men and genies, and raised his God-worshipping hands to pardon the sinners and granted gifts to the poor. On this occasion, the eulogists, the minstrels and singers who had prepared the musical notes of eternal joy, were favored with suitable awards, including Taliba-i Kalim, the composer of the following rubā‘i (quatrain) in praise of this Solomonic audience hall (bārgāh-i Sulaymānī), which was brought to the notice of the emperor:

rubā‘i

This new building, which is under the same shadow as the throne (ʿarsh) of God [= is its neighbor in the highest stage of heaven], loftiness is only a word next to the height of its plinth.

It is a garden (bāgh) and each of its green columns is a cypress (sarv), so that the repose of high and low (khāss-u-āmm) is under its shadow.

Abu Talib Kalim Kashani not only composed the quatrain quoted by Qazvini, Lahawri, and Kanbo, but also featured the audience hall more fully in his versified Pādshāhnāma (see appendix III for a transcription):

One of the buildings of that powerful king under whose shadow Time is at rest
Is Chihil Sutun of the glory of the sky, which is placed against the viewing place of high and low (manzar-i khāṣṣ-ʿāmm [= the jharoka])

At that place when to kiss the ground before the shāh gathered together the heads of the army

There was no building to cast shade so that they might be cheerful in this assembly

Neither during the rule of Shah Jannat Makan [posthumous title of Jahangir] nor during the period of Khaqan ʿArsh Ashyan [posthumous title of Akbar].

Sometimes the assembly was [exposed] to the heat of the sun, sometimes they became wet with the rain of the clouds.

By the order of the Second Sahib Qiran [Shah Jahan] soon in the imperial reign

A hall (īvān) of forty columns was built, it raised its head high to the sky.

Its length was determined to be of seventy gaz, to twenty-two was increased the figure of its width.

[The viewer's eyes] are glued to the spectacle of its ceiling, his head in the air like a column of khāṣṣ-ʿāmm.

The artist has painted its ceiling like painter Spring the flower garden.

The eyes [of the beholder] are so drawn to the flowers of the ceiling that he finds it difficult to look where he is walking [lit. to look before his feet].

A column is a cypress and the bird of the vision is a ring dove, on each cypress it has made a hundred nests.

There are many cypress trees in the garden of the world (gulshān-i ʿālam), but cypresses of an equally great stature there are few.

By the order of the shāh of the grandeur of the stars at Lahore in the place of assembly of high and low (majmaʿyi khāṣṣ-ʿāmm).

They made a Chihil Sutun of the same design (ṭarḥ) and it raised its head in exaltation to the sky.

Lastly, Ḥīnayat Khan gives an abridged version of the earlier descriptions:

Construction of a Forty-Columned Portico in front of the Balcony of the Hall of Public Audience

The public assembly of the world monarch was always held in front of the royal balcony (jharoka) of the Hall of Public Audience in the Akbarabad Fort. However, during the reigns of the late emperors Akbar and Jahangir, no coverings had existed over the area reserved for those standing in the royal presence; and accordingly, many had to bear the hardship of rain in the monsoon and heat in the summer. To alleviate this, His Majesty ordered a spacious Forty-Pillared Hall (Chihil-Sutun) to be built; and it was completed on the 4th of Zi’l-Hijja this year 1037 (August 5, 1628). Orders were issued that a similar hall should be built in front of the balcony at the Lahore capital, and that the building of the Royal Tower (Shah Burj) in the palace should be completed.

I have adduced these texts in full to show their different approaches. Lahawri is less concerned with the form of the building than with its function in the context of the ceremonial program of the palace. In his subsequent descriptions of other buildings of Shah Jahan, such as the palaces of Agra, Lahore, and Delhi, he will become more precise in his architectural details. Kanbo does his best to impress the Mughal court with his elaborate style and his metaphorical comparisons. These specific conventions of Mughal court rhetoric have the potential to guide us to the motivation for constructing a building, to its program and/or symbolic meaning. Kanbo’s panegyric statements that Shah Jahan’s halls will surpass the legendary audience hall of Solomon, the ultimate king of Islamic thinking, prompted me to read the halls as a Mughal recreation of the multi-columned halls of Persepolis, which in Islamic times was connected with Solomon. As noted earlier, Shah Jahan’s halls were referred to as Chihil Sutun. In addition to being a generic term for a multi-columned hall, Chihil Sutun was used as an alternate proper name for Persepolis. Moreover, all the authors emphasize Shah Jahan’s intention to provide his courtiers with protection from heat and rain through the construction of hypostyle halls. This motivation thus seems to resonate deeply with all of them. Arab historians cite protection from the sun as the reason behind the building of the first mosque in the house of Muhammad at Medina. Shah Jahan here emulated a gesture of the Prophet himself, sheltering his followers with a hypostyle construction that was patterned on a mosque.
As to the actual shape of the halls, we get the most architectural detail from the poetic description of Kalim. We learn that the hall had green columns "like cypresses," and a ceiling with painted flower designs so attractive that "the bird of the vision" was anxious to build its nest in it, meaning that the viewer's eyes were glued to the beautiful painted patterns of the ceiling.

II. VISUAL SOURCES

Visual evidence enables us to arrive at a fuller understanding of the audience halls. It can be found in the paintings that illustrate the history of Shah Jahan. These works belong to the genre generally described as "miniature painting," but they are in fact highly informative history paintings in small format, embodying all the ambition of the genre.

The hall in the images of the Windsor Castle Pādshāhnāma

Court reception, or darbār, scenes form the largest and most important group of the so-called Windsor Castle Pādshāhnāma, the only manuscript of Lahawri's history with contemporary illustrations so far known. It seems that several copies were planned, since individual paintings also exist that were probably meant to illustrate other copies of the Pādshāhnāma. The darbār scenes of the Windsor manuscript are all done according to the same formula: they show the emperor in the jharoka presiding over the proceedings of the Dawlat Khana-i Khaṣṣ-u-ʿAmm. The architecture is not represented for its own sake, but to provide a frame for the court event. Four paintings of the eleven darbār scenes of the Windsor Castle Pādshāhnāma show the audience halls (in the others only the jharoka is visible). These are:

A) Fol. 72b: The presentation of Prince Dara Shikoh's wedding gifts. Agra, Divan-i ʿAmm, February 4, 1633. Painted by Balchand, ca. 1635 (fig. 4). The hall is represented by two pairs of high, slender columns that frame the jharoka on each side in a perfectly balanced composition. The columns and their brackets support the flat roof, which is white and topped with an in-and-out crenellation pattern (kangura) and shows a slanting eave (chajja) above which are fixed rings to attach tentage. The base of the columns is red, while the shafts and the brackets are green, decorated with a pattern in gold. The topmost part of the column below the capital is set off in red and a different golden pattern. Above the capital, the red element (again with a different gold pattern) is extended to represent the red underside of the frontal bracket of a cruciform arrangement of brackets. A golden railing with a central door regulates access to the hall.

B) Fol. 98b: Shah Jahan receives the Persian ambassador Muhammad 'Ali Beg at Burhanpur in the Divan-i ʿAmm, March 1631. Attributed to the "Kashmiri painter," ca. 1633 (fig. 5). The hall stands behind the audience tent, which fills the center of the composition. Only the upper parts of its green and red columns are visible in the corners of the painting, supporting a flat roof similar to the one in fol. 72b/A (fig. 4), from which hangs a red eave (chajja) awning with a yellow flounce.

C) Fol. 147b: The departure of Prince Shah-Shujaʿ for Kabul. Agra, Divan-i ʿAmm, March 16, 1638. Painted by Murar, ca. 1640 (fig. 6). Similar to fol. 72b/A (fig. 4). Here the red strip above the capital clearly appears as the underside of the brackets.

D) Fol. 214b: Shah Jahan honoring Prince Aurangzeb at Agra before his wedding, April 27, 1637. Painted by Payag, ca. 1640 (fig. 7). Similar to fol. 72b/A (fig. 4).

E) Fol. 217b: The arrival of Prince Aurangzeb at the court in Lahore. Lahore, Divan-i ʿAmm, January 9, 1640. Painted by Murar, ca. 1645 (fig. 8). In this painting, more of the hall is visible than in any of the paintings discussed so far—the artist is obviously concerned to highlight its idiosyncratic features. Murar conforms to the convention of fol. 72b/A (fig. 4), fol. 147b/C (fig. 6), and fol. 214b/D (fig. 7) in the frontal rendering of the two outer green and red columns of the hall that frame the composition. However, he moves them towards the edge of the painting to show two more columns flanking the jharoka in a different perspective,
Fig. 4. (A) The presentation of Prince Dara Shikoh’s wedding gifts. Agra, Divan-i ‘Amm, February 4, 1633. Painted by Balchand, ca. 1635, Pādshāhnāma, fol. 72b. Windsor Castle, Royal Library, OMS 1616. (Photo: courtesy of the Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013)
Fig. 5. (B) Shah Jahan receives the Persian ambassador Muhammad ‘Ali Beg at Burhanpur in the Divan-i ‘Amm, March 1631. Attributed to the “Kashmiri painter,” ca. 1633, Pādshāhnāma, fol. 98b. Windsor Castle, Royal Library, OMS 1619. (Photo: courtesy of the Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013)
Fig. 6. (C) The departure of Prince Shah-Shuja’ for Kabul, Agra, Divan-i ‘Amm, March 16, 1638. Painted by Murar, ca. 1640, Pādshāhnāma, fol. 147b. Windsor Castle, Royal Library, OMS 1634. (Photo: courtesy of the Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013)
Fig. 7. (D) Shah Jahan honoring Prince Aurangzeb at Agra before his wedding, April 27, 1637. Painted by Payag, ca. 1640, \textit{Pādshāhnāma}, fol. 214b. Windsor Castle, Royal Library, OMS 1645. (Photo: courtesy of the Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013)
Fig. 8. (E) The arrival of Prince Aurangzeb at the court in Lahore. Lahore, Divan-i ‘Am, January 9, 1640. Painted by Murar, ca. 1645, Pādshāhnāma, fol. 217b. Windsor Castle, Royal Library, OMS 1646. (Photo: courtesy of the Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013)
three dimensional and free-standing, which allows him to document their peculiar shape as fully as possible. Above their capitals, the columns are topped not by the red-colored part of the shaft (as in the other examples discussed so far) but instead by red projecting impost blocks with a square section topped by yet another capital, which supports the brackets, arranged in a cruciform. Their red underside is here divided by a bluish-green stripe. The undersides of the eaves of the jharoka feature painted birds, and angels appear in a (painted?) sky on both sides of the jharoka below the ceiling, paraphrasing an actual feature of the palace of Lahore (fig. 9).58

In addition, on folio 194b, though the columns of the hall are not shown, the jharoka rests on short pilasters projecting from the back wall, which pick up the green color topped by a red capital. (Only the left pilaster is visible, the other being hidden by an attendant bearing a chawrī [fly whisk]).59

The hall in individual paintings

The wooden audience hall also features in four separate paintings that were obviously created at some point to illustrate copies of the history of Shah Jahan but were eventually pasted onto pages of albums.60 Only the one now in the Bodleian Library follows the darbār formula (though the jharoka appears in an asymmetrical position). The other three show more of the architecture of the hall. In chronological order they are:

F) Shah Jahan in the darbār at Agra, August 5, 1628(?). Ascribed to Murar, ca. 1630, and mounted in the St. Petersburg Album (fig. 10). 61 This painting was perhaps done on the occasion of the completion of the halls on August 5, 1628.62

The composition of this early painting of a Shah Jahan court reception does not as yet display the strict protocol observed in the later darbār scenes. Shah Jahan does not sit in the jharoka but in front and below it, on a squarish, four-poled platform (takht) with a baldachin placed on the floor of the hall. This sort of “throne bed” represented the prevailing throne form of Shah Jahan. He appears at equal height with his sons and courtiers, who stand around him in two opposing profile groups whose interlocking formation is still indebted to Jahan-giri darbārs.63 Also, the deep perspective of the hall will later be replaced by a flattened minimalistic rendering of the architecture (see A, C, and D [figs. 4, 6, and 7]). We get a full view into the hall from below, with three of its columns on each side, the outer most ones framing the painting, similar to Murar’s rendering of the hall of Lahore (E [fig. 8]). The columns support the flat, heavily decorated ceiling, partly covered with patterned textiles, on brackets arranged in a cruciform. The bracket construction is also similar to E (fig. 8); the columns, however, are not topped by red impost blocks but merely with the red element corresponding to the width of their shafts, as in A, C, D, and H (figs. 4, 6, 7, and 13). The interest shown in the depiction of architecture is characteristic of the artist Murar.
Fig. 10. (F) Shah Jahan in the darbār at Agra, August 5 1628(?). Ascribed to Murar, ca. 1630, and mounted in the St. Petersburg Album. St. Petersburg, Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Ms. E.14, p. 34a. (Photo after The St. Petersburg Muraqqa’: Album of Indian and Persian Miniatures of the 16th–18th Centuries and Specimens of Persian Calligraphy of ‘Imād al-Ḥasani, ed. Oleg F. Akimushkin [Milan: Leonardo Arte, 1996], pl. 125)
G, a and b) A night celebration of the Prophet’s birthday. Agra, Divan-i ‘Amm, September 16, 1633. Attributed by Milo Beach to Bulaqi, ca. 1635, detached from the St. Petersburg Album. Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, Purchase F 1942.18a and 17a (figs. 11 and 12).64

This is the only representation of the hall to extend over two pages. It is also the only instance in which Shah Jahan is shown in a “convivial” situation, partaking in a public meal.65 In the left-hand painting, Shah Jahan sits under a four-poled, white baldachin66 on the floor of the hall below the jharoka, which is framed on each side by a row of four columns in a flat, silhouetted arrangement; in the right-hand painting, members of the religious orthodoxy of Agra sit between and around two rows of columns arranged in the same way. The columns are green throughout; the capitals are delineated in red, and brackets arranged in a cruciform support the red beams of the flat, red ceiling topped by a grayish roof.


The composition deviates from the darbār formula in that the jharoka is not placed in the center, and on the left side we get a view into the court. The outer row of three silhouetted columns on the left side here represents the beginning of the hall. On the left side of the jharoka is a pair of two columns and on the right, a column is visible lining the edge of the painting. A frieze of painted European putti runs below the ceiling on both sides of the jharoka, alluding, as mentioned in the discussion of E (fig. 8) above, to an actual feature of the Lahore palace decoration, though not necessarily of the audience hall.

I) The emperor Shah Jahan on the Peacock Throne. Attributed by inscription to ‘Abid, son of Aqa Riza, dated...
Fig. 13. (H) Shah Jahan receives the Persian ambassador Yadgar Beg. Divan-i ’Amm, Lahore, November 22, 1638. Attributed to Payag, ca. 1640. University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Ousely Add. 173, no. 13. (Photo: courtesy of the Bodleian Library)
the 13th year of the reign = 1639–40. San Diego Museum of Art, 1990:352 (fig. 14).68

The painting shows a complex architectural composition in deep central perspective. As mentioned above, such perspectival constructions are unusual in Shah Jahani painting and would be in line with the artistic temperament of the artist ʿAbid, who liked to take liberties with the impositions of official imperial representation. The painting follows the conventional formula in that the architectural arrangement is centered on Shah Jahan, who does not sit in the jharoka but on his fabled Peacock Throne. Behind him is a high baldachin raised on four high poles flanked by two yurts, which are, as Peter Andrew has shown, a symbolic statement of the nomadic origin of the Mughals.69 Behind appears the audience hall, of which we see mainly the carpeted floor and, on each side, five extremely foreshortened green columns. The arrangement looks like a pastiche, an architectural composition made up of elements of the highest ceremonial importance to the Mughals.

Mughal painting rarely gives an exact image of the architecture it portrays. This is even true of Shah Jahani painting, where carefully observed details misled scholars to take everything represented at face value. Typical features of the architecture are often mixed with freer inventions, or we get paraphrases of a building. Also, painting is more conservative than architecture, and in several instances the wooden audience hall features in the depiction of an event that took place long after it had been replaced by the stone hall.71

III. ARCHITECTURAL SOURCES AND RECONSTRUCTION

The case of Shah Jahan’s first wooden audience halls is special because we know of at least three different halls—those in Agra, Lahore, and Burhanpur—showing purportedly the same design. This is also true of their later stone replacements at Agra, Lahore, and the new hall at Delhi, which follow the same plan, although with varying proportions and details. If we take all the evidence together, both written and visual—a quite clear picture of Shah Jahan’s first wooden audience hall emerges.

It was a large hall, on high slender columns, with a flat roof, around 56.90 meters by 17.90 meters (figs. 15–18). The height is not given. If we compare these measurements with those of the surviving stone halls, they come close to those of the Delhi hall (54.66 m x 18.41 m x 12.66 m) and the Lahore hall (54 m x 18.32 m x 10.57 m); the hall at Agra was longer (61.48 m x 20.72 m x 11.55 m) (figs. 19 and 20). We can thus assume for the wooden hall a height between 10.50 and 12.50 meters. The hall was thus extremely large for a wooden construction, certainly longer (but less high) than the wooden hall of its later namesake, the Chihil Sutun at Isfahan (1647), which measures about 37 meters by 19.50 meters; its columns are 13.05 meters high (without the plinth and the roof) (fig. 21).72 It is likely that the columns of Shah Jahan’s wooden halls were arranged in the same way as in the stone halls. Both types were referred to as Chihil Sutun.
Fig. 15. The wooden audience hall of Shah Jahan, reconstructed plan. (Drawing: R. A. Barraud and © Ebba Koch)

Fig. 16. Reconstruction of the wooden audience hall of Shah Jahan, omitting the back wall with the jharoka, perspectival view. (Drawing: R. A. Barraud and © Ebba Koch)
and indeed had forty columns, with four rows of ten columns, ten on the long side and four on the short side. Rows of four columns are visible in the Freer painting (G, a and b [figs. 11 and 12]), but not in the San Diego painting (I [fig. 14]), where we see five columns on each side; 'Abid’s version is also otherwise a free paraphrase. In all the paintings, the columns are green, like cypresses, as Kalim also tells us, and their thin shafts, probably faceted (see C, E, and H [figs. 6, 8, and 13]), are painted with a pattern in gold. The topmost part of the shafts below the capital was red, or had a red, oblong impost block inserted, and supported brackets, which were also green with gold decoration, like the columns; their undersides were painted red. As in similar constructions of stone architecture, the arrangement of the brackets depended on the position of the columns in the hall, and the free-standing columns had a cruciform arrangement of four brackets. All the brackets supported the beams of the flat ceiling, which showed a rich, painted decoration, proving Kalim right again.

The unclear point concerns the red tops of the columns. We cannot establish with certainty whether in
the depictions of the Agra hall this feature represented merely a differently colored part of the shaft, or whether this was an abbreviated way of showing the wider impost block that Murar indicates for the Lahore hall. Payag’s depiction of the Lahore hall in the Bodleian painting (H [fig. 13]) shows the upper part of the columns as just a red extension. Still, I feel Murar’s depiction of the specific shape of the columns of the Lahore hall (E [figs. 8 and 9]; see also fig. 18) could be correct and applicable to all the halls because it is not imagined but a form of real architecture. The high impost blocks above the capitals of the shafts are a characteristic element of the vernacular wooden architecture of regions of the Mughal empire that are today situated in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Such columns appear in the wooden architecture of Uchchh Sharif in northern Sind, in Mughal times part of the šūba (province) of Multan. It was an ancient spiritual center with its own distinct building tradition. Examples particularly close to Murar’s painted architecture are found in the columned interior halls of the mosque and tomb of Jalal al-Din Surkh Bukhari (fl. early fourteenth century) (figs. 22–24), the father of the famous pir Makhdum-i Jahaniyan Jahangasht (d. 1384), and in the tomb of Sadr al-Din Rajan Qattal. These tombs were
rebuilt in the nineteenth or early twentieth century, but scholars assume that the renovation followed the existing architecture. Columns with high impost blocks also appear in the wooden architecture of the Hindu Kush. In the Swat valley, which in Mughal times belonged to the ṣūba of Kabul, close forms of columns appear in the old Jumat (Friday mosque) of Madyan and in wooden houses of the region (fig. 25). The dating here is also difficult: Dani assumes that the Madyan mosque “was built more than two hundred years ago.” Other examples of such columns from the Hindu Kush region come from the recently published shrine of the Isma‘ili spiritual teacher Nasir Khusraw (d. ca. 1075) in Hazrat Sayyid, in the Yumgan Valley, Badakhshan, today in Afghanistan, near the border with Pakistan. The complex consists of a tomb, a columned hall, and a mosque, all with wooden columns topped with, inter alia, high impost blocks, built and rebuilt since the eleventh century (fig. 26). For the last major rebuilding, there is an inscription dated 1109 (1697) on a beam of the ceiling of the tomb chamber.
Fig. 23. Wooden columns topped by impost blocks, interior of the tomb of Jalal al-Din Surkh Bukhari, early fourteenth century, Uchchh, Pakistan. (Photo: Ebba Koch, 1996)
Fig. 24. Wooden ceiling, tomb of Jalal al-Din Surkh Bukhari, early fourteenth century, Uchchh, Pakistan. (Photo: Ebba Koch, 1996)

Fig. 25. Old Jumat (Friday mosque), Madyan, Swat Valley, uncertain date. (Photo after Johannes Kalter, *The Arts and Crafts of the Swat Valley: Living Traditions in the Hindu Kush* [London: Thames and Hudson, 1991], fig. 72)
which, as its name indicates, was derived from the vernacular hut of Bengal with a curved-up roof. Translated into marble, it gave its shape first to the Bangla-i Darshan, the pavilion in which the emperor appeared every morning to his subjects, and from its exclusive use in the palace made its way back out to eventually become a widely used feature of Indian architecture.80

Wooden hypostyle mosques and talārs

The regional architecture of the northwestern areas of the Mughal empire that inspired the halls of Shah Jahan is linked to a wider tradition of wooden architecture best represented by mosques of Central Asia, Kashmir, northwestern Iran, and post-Seljuk Anatolia. The oldest known example of hypostyle wooden mosques is the Jamiʿ Masjid of Khiva. Reconstructed in the eighteenth century, it has preserved its wooden columns, which date from different periods, reaching back to the ninth century and earlier (fig. 27).81 The columns of the Jamiʿ Masjid of Khiva have an elongated baluster form extensively used in the vernacular architecture of Central Asia, which, translated into marble, was to have its own carrier in Shah Jahani palace architecture.82 It is noteworthy that this baluster type of Central Asian column was not used for Shah Jahan’s audience hall, though it might have contributed to the idea of a wooden hypostyle hall with high, slender columns. We note here a clear differentiation in the reception of regional forms in the palace. Another wooden mosque tradition with which the Mughals were familiar was that of Kashmir. The most impressive example is the Jamiʿ Masjid of Srinagar, founded in 1400. Its grand columns have faceted shafts with simple bases and capitals, and date from the early twentieth century.83 The prevailing type of columns in the wooden mosques of northwest Iran (fig. 28)84 and post-Seljuk Anatolia (fig. 29)85 have a faceted shaft topped by a muqarnas capital, a form also widely used in stone architecture, though with different details and proportions, and varying bases.86 The painted ceilings of these wooden halls give us an impression of how the ceiling of Shah Jahan’s hall, so admired by Kalim, might have looked (fig. 24).

To sum up, we can state that we do have, from Central Asia to Anatolia, a widespread medieval tradition of wooden hypostyle constructions, with mosques repre-
senting the closest examples for the overall shape of Shah Jahan's audience halls and the wooden architecture of the northwestern regions of the Mughal empire providing the closest relatives for the shape of the columns. No monumental hypostyle halls in wooden post-and-beam construction are preserved in pre-seven-
teenth-century palace architecture. We know, however, of wooden buildings or porches called talārs in Central Asia and Iran, which occur as well in Mughal India. Babur mentions in the autumn of 1528 a “squat, inharmonious wooden talār” that his man Rahimdad had built in his garden at Gwalior; and later in the year he describes a “newly erected octagonal talār” covered with scented grass (khas) that was used for receptions in one of his gardens at Agra. Similarly, Babur’s associate Zayn Khan speaks of “colored and decorated talārs and stone edifices on the sides and environs” of the Hasht Bihisht Garden at Agra. Talārs are still mentioned in Shah Jahan’s time, when we learn, on the occasion of the emperor’s visit to Kashmir in June 1634, about a colorful, double-storied talār in the midst of four chinār (plane) trees on one of the two terraces of the Bahr Ara Garden (miyān–i chinārā talārī sākhta and dū martaba dar kamāl rangīn), which was an imperial garden situated on the bank of Dal Lake, opposite (muhāḥzá, barābar) the jharoka of the palace in the fortress of the Hari Parbat at Srinagar.

The Mughals brought the tradition of Timurid talārs to India and applied the term to pillared wooden pavilions, which could be of different shapes and would be painted, but the expression does not seem to have been used for large halls. Still, such gaily-colored talārs used in garden architecture and also in a ceremonial context would have contributed to the idea of a wooden audience hall, with green and red columns and a richly decorated ceiling. It was an experiment that gave way to the aesthetic emphasizing pure white in imperial buildings, where color appeared mainly in the interior and in the form of textiles (cf. figs. 1 and 16).

The Indo-Islamic tradition of wooden audience halls

We have, furthermore, literary evidence for a grandiose wooden audience hall at Delhi predating the Mughal halls. Tony Welch and Howard Crane have drawn attention to a vast wooden hall for public audiences named Hazar Sutun, which was built for the Delhi sultan Muhammad b. Tughluq in 1343 in his palace at Jahanpanah-Delhi.

Ibn Batuta describes this palace and says about the hall:

The third door opens into an immense and vast hall called Hazar Ustun, which means [in Persian] “a thousand columns.” The columns are of painted wood and support a wooden roof, most exquisitely carved. The people sit under this, and it is in this hall that the Sultan sits for public audience.

The court poet Badr al-Din Chach eulogizes its completion in Muharram 744 (June 1343) and calls it Khurramabad (Abode of Joy), pointing out that the king used it as a court of justice.

The Hazar Sutun was visited in 1398 by Timur’s ladies as one of the famous sites of Delhi, and its memory was kept alive in Mughal historiography. At the end of the sixteenth century, Abu’l Fazl described it more grandiosely as “a lofty hall (buland īvānī) with a thousand columns of white marble (hazār sutūn az sangi rukhām).” Shah Jahan and his builders certainly knew of it when they planned the new Mughal audience hall. The way Abu’l Fazl represented the Tughluq hall may have influenced the decision to have the halls eventually redone in stone “made marble white with plaster.”

Thus, we have a tradition of wooden audience halls in the Muslim architecture of north India for which Shah Jahan’s wooden audience halls represent the earliest surviving examples. They predate the first monumental wooden halls of the Safavids at Isfahan by about ten years. Sussan Babaie calls the Isfahan buildings with these halls talār-palaces and establishes their dates: the earliest, the Talar-i Tavila dates from 1637, the Aynakhana was built for Shah Safi I in the 1630s, and the Chihil Sutun (fig. 21) and the talār of the Ali Qapu date from 1647. For Babaie, talār-palaces, a combination of a monumental wooden hall and a masonry building, were specific to mid-seventeenth-century Isfahan—“nowhere else did they emerge or could have been appropriated”—and she sees their inspiration in the small structures of the vernacular talārs of Mazandaran, which are formally different from those in Isfahan. She also argues that they proclaim a distinctive Perso-Shi’i performance of kingship, with altered ceremonial needs of conviviality, different from the earlier compact pavilion type, the hasht bihisht.

But it seems that by the 1630s the idea of monumental wooden audience halls could have easily come from India, though, as I have shown in my earlier discussion of Shah Jahan’s halls, the concept of constructing large
hypostyle audience halls seems in turn to have gone back to ancient Iran, the Achaemenid halls of Persepolis. Ideas travelled back and forth; for instance, in 1633, Shah Jahan sent an image of the newly conquered Daulatabad, probably painted by Murar, to Shah Safi, to impress him not only with the conquest but also with its topographic depiction. Similarly, it is quite possible that knowledge of the new wooden audience halls of Shah Jahan reached Isfahan and that the Safavids wanted to come up with their own version, a talâr-palace tailored to their ceremonial requirements. By the time of Shah Jahan, the Mughals were no more on the receiving side, and Iran began to look to India for inspiration.

The wooden audience halls, however, grand as they were with their forest of tall green columns and painted ceilings praised by the poets, did not represent the ultimate solution for Shah Jahan in his quest for perfection, which resulted in a stylistic and architectural harmony in all his creations. (It has a parallel in his search for the best historian.) The success of his quest is borne out by the evidence that even in their experimental and transitional stages, these halls became an inspiration to be consumed by others.

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در عهد فرمانروایی حضرت عرش اشیانی و سلطنت حضرت جنت مکانی و بعد از جلوس حضرت حمیلی نانی تا این تاریخ بیش محرکه دولتخانه خاص و عام که دران چنین بندگان به دولت بار و سعادت دیدار می‌رسند عارف که ملترمان بالاتر حضور را از باران و گرمی پناه باشند- نبود- ایوانی از باری که استاده می‌کردند چنانچه نکاوشت[e=نکاوشت] شد- و چون درن زمان مسئول هر چه سرمایه آسایش حمیلی نانی است از ممکن قوت مظهر فعل آمد، آنچه بی‌پا آراش حمیلی نانی است از حضیدع عدم باوج وجود شتافت، بحک عالم آرا مهاران جا در آثار- و گناهان آزار کار، ایوانی عالی که سر [222] بکیوان کشیده است و بنای رعیه که پس‌درد دهنه رسته در بیش محرکه دولت خانه خاص و عام بطول هفتاد کر و عرض بیست و دوگ کپادش‌ها در چهل روز چنانچه در مرای ضیف نورانی حضرت کیتی ستانی بارو افکده یوز بودنام رساندند- هم استادگان یوزگاه اورنگ حمیلی نانی را ازآب و آفتان بناهی تازه حم رسول و هم روی بارگاه آسایان جا را یوزیت پاتن‌ها- سه طرف این ایوان و آل بیانکه هر طرف واحی دارد و ازون امرا و خدمت بیشکان و دیکر منصوبان رونسان دریم آیب مجیری از نیره نصب کردن. درین ایوان بندیا در خور پایه جانی که معین است به آینی که لائق محل سلطانین با فرز و تمکین باشند می‌یستند بلندری پشت مجیر و چندی که بنسبت قرب امتیاز دارند متصلبدو ستون که نزدیک محرکه است و قور برداران با علمهای زرین و طوفاغ زرین و قول خاصه در جانب چپ پشت بدویار قیام می‌نامید- در بیش این بتای آسایان سا حضیدع است وسیع بر دوران جوی محرکه رنگین که بران ساپاگاه مخلوه زرته بری افازند- درین جا هر که منصوب از دوسرین کتر است و احیانی کاندا و تفنگچین قدر اندان و برخی از تابنام امرا بار می‌بایند- بر دروازه‌ها دولت خانه خاص و عام و هر دو مجیر گر برداران معروف و یسایوان و دربانان بلباسهای فاخر منبیستند- تا بیکانی را و هر که لائق مرتبه ازین مرتب بار نباشند راه تنهاد- معنی بردار شعر طراز طالب کلم این رباعی دروصف این محل وآلا بیانی نظم نوده بهعرض اقدس رسانید- و بصلة پادشاهن دالم امید او [223] کرمان با عطا کردید.

شعر
این تازه بنامه عرش همسایه اوست رفعت حرفی ز رنگ پایه اوست باغشته که هر سئون سنزش سروست کاسیش خاص و عام در ساپی اوست
و حکم مقدس شرف صدور یافه که در دار السلطنت لاهور نیز پیش محرکه دولت خانه خاص و عام
به همین آین ایوانی عالی بنا کنند.

[258] جای دادن خواص و عوام خصوص ایستادگان پایه سیر سلیمانی در سایه عنايت و ظل مرحمت

یعنی اساس مانند ایوان چهل ستون در صنعت خاص و عام

بhem الله که عنايتی خاصی پاداش به بعوم و خواص از جمع وجوه اقتصادی علوم و شمول نموده به
صنفی از اصناف و شخصی از اشخاص انسان اختصاصی ندارد. فناونده نظر عاطفه که شامل حال
عالی است مانند جود حضرت واجب نمودن چه رهبة یا فرو کرده، و آثار نیسان احسانش به بر خشک و
تر و بحر و بر بارانست چون چنین رحمت هم جا رسدی - لیکن بیوسته همت وارد در ظاهر و
باطن بر تحقیق اطلاعات قلب و فراخ خاطر اهل گیتی بیست و - فناونده هیچ خطه از روزگار سعادت
آثار نیگرند که آسایش و آرامش عالمان منظر نظر ناشد و - عزمی روشنایی بر پیام رد یاریام
امان اهل زمین و زمان مقصود نبود - از جمله هواه صدی این دعوی احداث بارگاه چهل ستون
هیاپانست که درین ایام در فضای کریاس خاص و عام اساس پافته، و سبب بنداد این نشته سه شهداد
و دیوانگیه عدل و داد که رو کش بارگاه سلیمان و ایوان نوشیروان بود اینست که چون همه را از همه سورد
روی امید بدن جناب است - وعلیه را بقصد عرض مقصد و رفع مطالب و برآمد حواجی و مازرب بدن
مرجع عالمان بازگشت است - ازین جمیت که هنگام عرض و مجزی از زمیت بارش براسات و آسیب تف
توز محاسب و پناه کاهی نبود - لاجرم بمقتضای مرحمت تامین‌نامه فرمان قضا جریان بیدن مضمن توقف نافذ
یافت - که در دار الخلافة کبیر و هیچمین در آتی اعظم بلاد مالک محمدس هر جا که دولت سرای
بنیاد یافته باشد - خاصه در دار السلطنت لاهور در پیشگاه حمرونه خاص و عام که محل انجام حاجت
جملانی است ایوانی مشتقل بر چهل ستون بطول هفت فراغ ذراع و عرض پیست و دو ذراع طرح افکنده
زود پیام سرست - تا سایر بنهایا درگاه یزدمت (259) تابش اتفاق و تشوش بارش سعاب فراخ البال
برعی مطالب استغلال تواند نمود - جمله با بر افزایش بدن آسیب گرفت پناه مشتقل بر چهل ستون به
عظتمت اساس یافته که رفعت آستاان بعث کسر شان ایوان کمری کشته و از این دست و والا بنیاد
مقصوده (مقصوده ای) که از روش متابعیت اساسی قصور در بنای قصر میبده راه یافته در عرض
چهل روز با ابن طول و و عرض و و وضع غرب و و هندسه بیدع خاطر فریب بستم رسیده باعث حیرت
نظارگیان کشت:

ایبات
در روزگار تلاوت صاحب قران که دهر
عالی اساس بارگاهی شد بنابر این راست
از روش تابلیق در و دیوارش از شفق
چون این فرخندی بنا که معنی سنین اتمام و صورت انجام پذیرفت اختر شماران سطرلاب نظر ساعتی
بر از نگاه و قرب سعوی در نتیجه ییست و پنجم ذی جمه سبب هزار و سی و هفت هیبر و گردندند-
شاندهش فلک بارگاه بعد از انتقاد ییست گزه روز در ساعت مختار انگیزه رسا دقيق رسان دین
محفل تحسین آینه که با بنوع زیب و زینت تنزین داشت اوريک نشین سریر اقبال و اکیل گژن افسر جاه
و جلال کشتدند- و جهور امان را در آن بارگاه خاص بار عاری، عاری داده زبان سپاس گزار بستاش آفریدگار
ابن و جان و دست حق پرست به خشابی و خشکش کنگاران [گنجکاران] و مختاران بر کشتدند
[کشداهن] و سایر شاگردان و همچنین سروی سرایان و نمای پرداز را ساز عیش جاویدی آمده
نوده طالبای کلم را که این رباعی بوصف آن بارگاه سلیمان در سلک نظام کشیده بفرض مقدس رسانید
صله شایسته مرحت فرمودند:
رباعی

این تازه بنا که عرض همسایه ایست
ساطش خاص و عاری در سایه ایست
[260]
رفعت حرفي ز رتبه پایه ایست
APPENDIX III


یکی از بنای‌های آن کامگار
نود جل ستون سپهر احتشام
در آنجا چو کمر زمین بوس شاه
بنا به نی نبود سایه فکن
نی در عهد شاهی جفت مکان
گنگد خلق در تاب از آفتاب
به فرمان ثانی صاحبقران
شید ایوانی از جل ستون ساخته
به هفتاد گر یافته طولش قرار
بود در تماثل سقفش مدام
به سقفش هیان گردیده صنعت کنار
به گل‌های سقفش ز بس مایل است
به سلسله سرن و مرغ نکه فاوتنه
بسی سرو در کلش عالم است
به فرمان شاه تربی مقام
به این طرح هم چل ستون ساختند
NOTES

Author's note: This article was written in the context of my project “The Palaces and Gardens of Shah Jahan (rul. 1628–58),” sponsored by the Austrian Science Funds (FWF Project No. P 21 480-G21), which I am carrying out as a senior researcher at the Institute of Iranian Studies, part of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (2009–14). I would like to thank Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Yunus Jaffery for his help in the study and translation of the Mughal sources. The architect Richard A. Barraud prepared the drawings of the existing audience halls and drew with great enthusiasm my new reconstruction of the wooden halls. I am grateful as well to Sunil Kumar for reading the manuscript and making helpful suggestions to clarify the introduction and conclusion. And I also thank Stephan Popp for digitizing the Persian texts in the appendices.

8. For this and the following, see ʿInāyat Khān, The Shah Jahan Nama of ʿInayat Khan: An Abridged History of the Mughal Emperor Shāh Jahan, Compiled by His Royal Librarian. The Nineteenth-Century Manuscript Translation of A. R. Fuller (British Library, Add. 30,777), rev. and ed. W. E. Begley and Z. A. Desai (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), introduction, pp. xiii–xxix. Shah Jahan’s historiography has also been studied by Stephan Conermann, in Historiographie als Sinnstiftung: Indo-persische Geschichtsschreibung während der Mogulzeit (932–1118/1516–1707) (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2002), but since it was written in German, it has not attracted much attention on the part of Mughal historians.
12. Chandar Bhān Brahman, Chahār Chaman, Persian text ed. Sayyid Muhammad Jaffery, special issue, Qand-i Pārsi 22 (New Delhi: Office of the Cultural Counselor, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1383 [2004]); Rajeev Kumar Kinra, “Secretary-Poets in Mughal India and the Ethos of

13. See Begley and Desai, Taj Mahal, the Illumined Tomb, pp. xxvii–xxviii.

14. Kalim’s Pâdshâhnâma is still unpublished. I have used British Library, Ethé no. 1570, Ms. Or. 357, which has been transcribed in typescript by S. M. Yunus Jaffery. For Kalim’s work, see Wheeler M. Thackston, “The Poetry of Abû-Tâlib Kalim: Persian Poet-Laureate of Shâhjahân, Mughal Emperor of India” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1974). The Pâdshâhnâma does not, though, form part of his study.


16. See Begley and Desai, Taj Mahal, the Illumined Tomb, pp. xxvii–xxviii.


19. A remarkable exception has been discovered by R. D. McChesney, “An Early Seventeenth-Century Palace Complex (Dawlatkhāna) in Balkh,” Muqarnas 26 (2009): 95–117. It is the description of a palace built by Nâzir Muhammad Khan at Balkh around 1611–12, which appears in the Buhr al-asrâr fi manaqib al-akhâyr, a universal history written by Maḥmûd b. Amir Valî (born in about 1595). He had travelled to India before becoming the personal librarian of the khan who commissioned him to write this work. The problem with this very detailed description is that it stands by itself; there is no surviving building to match it, which makes the interpretation difficult, and several architectural terms remain enigmatic. The description of the Balkh palace was written by 1635, at around the same time that the first descriptions of palaces start to appear in Shah Jahan’s history.

20. See Koch, Complete Taj Mahal, 236–57.

21. Over the years I have been compiling a glossary of Mughal architectural terms, which can be found in Ebba Koch, Mughal Architecture: An Outline of Its History and Development, 1526–1858, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002); Koch, Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology; and Koch, Complete Taj Mahal. For instance, one major term that was assimilated was jharoka, the term for the imperial viewing window. The word’s origin is not quite clear. Simon Digby felt that it was a vernacular Indian term “made official” by Abû’l Fazl: personal communication, n.d. See The Abû’l Fazl Acc. by Abû’l Fazl “Allâmi,” trans. in 3 vols.: vol. 1 by H. Blochmann, 2nd ed. rev. and ed. D. C. Philott (Calcutta, 1927; repr. New Delhi, 1977–78), p. 56. The Indologist Joachim Deppert suggested that there might be a connection to the Sanskrit term jhâlâkshaka, meaning grille or eye: personal communication, February 13, 1992. John T. Platts, A Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi and English (Oxford, 1884; repr. New Delhi, 1977), 403, has it under “jharokhâ” and gives its meaning as, inter alia, “window.” In a review of the 2002 edition of my book Mughal Architecture, Pramod Chandra stated categorically that: “jharoka,” more correctly jharokha (I am using the Mughal spelling, which is jharokha) is not a Sanskrit but a Hindi word, derived from the Skt [-Sanskrit] jala-gavâska.”: Pramod Chandra, “Review of Mughal Architecture: An Outline of Its History and Development, 1526–1858 by Ebba Koch; Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays by Ebba Koch,” Journal of the American Oriental Society 123, 4 (2003): 911.


24. On this point, see Koch, Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology, 236–39.


28. Qazvînî, Pâdshâhnâma, fols. 137b and 162a / Jaffery, transcript, pp. 206 and 242. At Shah Jahan’s accession the hall had not yet been built; there was a tent hall, as Lahawri says. See below.

29. Qazvînî, Pâdshâhnâma, fol. 162a / Jaffery, transcript, p. 242, calls it the majlis-i-divân-i Sulaymân-i zamân, the assembly council of the Solomon of the age; his description is altogether richer in expression than the later one by Lahawri, and he emphasizes that the hall was also for pomp and magnificence, so that the glory of the court (shukûh-i bârgâh-i jalâl) might increase “the glory of the workshop of creation.”

30. ‘Abd al-‘Hamîd Lâhawri, Pâdshâhnâma, Persian text ed. M. Kabîr al-Dîn A’hâmad and M. ‘Abd al-Rahîm, 2 vols. (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1867–72), vol. 1, pt. 1, p. 146, mentions the “ivân az pârcha” in the context of his description of the emperor’s daily routine after the description of his accession on 8 Jumada al-Thani 1037 (February 14, 1628). It was enclosed on three sides by a wooden balus-
38. Dr. Jaffrey authorized me to carry out some editing of his translation and to adjust the architectural terminology. I have also added annotations.

39. This is an example of Mughal crypto- or neo-Platonic thinking; things necessary for world rule pre-exist in an outer worldly domain and are called into existence by the pādshāh.

40. Shaddad is a mythical and perhaps historical king of the city of Iram of the Pillars in southern Arabia, which features in Koran 89:6–8.

41. Also called Taq-i Kisra or Ivan-i Kisra, the large, vaulted niche built by the Sasanian kings at Ctesiphon in the sixth century. It was used proverbially to refer to any grand royal building. For the meaning of these buildings and further literature, see Koch, "Divan-i 'Amm and Chihil Sutun," 149–52, repr. in Koch, Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology, 242–43.

42. See previous note.

43. Bisutun is a mountain circa 30 kilometers east of Kirman-shah on the main road from Baghdad to Hamadan. High above the road is the famous bas-relief of Darius the Great with cuneiform inscriptions in Old Persian, Akkadian, and Elamite. Below was the relief of the Parthian king Gotarzes. The trilingual inscription provided the key to the decipherment of all cuneiform inscriptions. Bisutun was regarded as a world wonder by the Muslims. See Ernst Herzfeld and R. N. Frye, EI2, s.v. "Bisutûn."

44. One ghari represents the space of twenty-four minutes; see F. Steingass, A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary: Including the Arabic Words and Phrases to Be Met with in Persian Literature: Being Johnson and Richardson's Persian, Arabic, and English Dictionary, Revised, Enlarged, and Entirely Reconstructed (London, 1892; repr. New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1973), 1107. Twenty gharis are thus eight hours.

45. Since the Mughals did not use a crown, the phrase is either meant in a metaphorical sense or refers to a turban with jeweled ornaments or the like.

46. Kanbō, 'Amal-i Śālih, 1:258–60; see also Koch, "Divan-i 'Amm and Chihil Sutun," 149–53, repr. in Koch, Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology, 242–43. For a translation of part of the passage into French, see Joshi, “L’espaces cérémoniel,” 60.

47. Kalim, Pādshāhnāma, fol. 117 margin / Jaffrey, transcript, p. 213. My translation is based on the earlier one I did with Yunus Jaffrey.

48. 'Ināyat Khān, Shah Jahan Nama, 25. I have not changed the terminology of this translation, though I would not translate "ivān" as "portico" in this case, since the large hall is certainly more than that, nor "jharoka" as "balcony."

49. I have discussed how Persepolis was known, visited, and referred to through the centuries, and how it would have been known during Mughal times, in Koch, "Divan-i 'Amm and Chihil Sutun," 148–49, repr. in Koch, Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology, esp. 239–43. There I also pointed out that contrary to common belief, Humayun did not visit the site during his Persian exile. The assumption is based on an error of Charles Stuart in his translation of Jawhar, The Tezkereh al vakāt: Or, Private Memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Humayūn (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1832; repr. Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyyāt-i Delli, 1972), 66–67, 71. Stuart took the Takht-i Sulayman where Humayun hunted with Shah Tahmasp in 1544 to be Persepolis, while Jawhar was actually speaking of the Takht-i Sulayman southeast of Lake Urmīya in northwestern Iran.


Ibid., cat. no. 14, pp. 46–47 (color illus.), 172–73.

Ibid., cat. no. 17, pp. 52–53 (color illus.), 176–77.

For the tents of Shah Jahan, see Peter A. Andrews, Felt Tents and Pavilions, The Nomadic Tradition and Its Interaction with Princely Tentage, 2 vols. (London: Melsende, 1999), 12131–210; the tents of this painting are discussed on pp. 1174–76.

Beach and Koch, King of the World, cat. no. 32, pp. 82–83 (color illus.), 190–91.

Ibid., cat. no. 43, pp. 104–5 (color illus.), 206–7.

The artist clearly introduced these features to further denote the hall as the one in the Lahore palace. Birds and angels are also elements in a program of mural decoration in the Lahore palace dating from the time of Shah Jahan’s father, Jahangir. Birds and angels—derived from a European putti type transmitted to the Mughal court by the Jesuits—are featured prominently in the vault of the so-called Kala Burj, where they appear in an extravagant Europeanizing interpretation of traditional Islamic iconography, that of the flying retinue surrounding the prophetic king Solomon on his airborne throne. See Koch, Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology, 12–37. With this imagery, based on the Islamic legends woven around the Koranic prophetic king, Jahangir is here celebrated as a second Solomon.

Beach and Koch, King of the World, cat. no. 38, illus. on p. 95.

On this point, see the introduction by Milo Beach in Beach and Koch, King of the World, 15–19.

Stuart C. Welch, in The St. Petersburg Muraqqa’: Album of Indian and Persian Miniatures of the 16th–18th Centuries and Specimens of Persian Calligraphy of Imād al-Hasani, ed. Oleg F. Akimushkin (Milan: Leonardo Arte, 1996), 92–93, pl. 125/fol. 34. Welch does not comment on the architecture depicted on the hall; he ascribes the painting to Murad (= Murar), one of the artists of the Windsor illustrations, and points out his accuracy in the representation of architectural features.


For the development of the Shah Jahan group portrait, see Ebba Koch, “The Hierarchical Principles of Shah-Jahani Painting,” in Beach and Koch, King of the World,” 133–37, repr. in Koch, Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology, 133–44.


Andrews, Felt Tents and Pavilions, 11094–95, 1126–27, established the term nāgâra for this type of white horizontal canopy on four poles.

Andrew Topham, Paintings from Mughal India (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2008), 74–75 (color illus.).

B. N. Goswamy and Caron Smith, Domains of Wonder: Selected Masterworks of Indian Painting, exh. cat. (San Diego: San Diego Museum of Art, 2006), 142–43, color illus. on pl. 55. The authors of the catalogue note the hall, but they are not aware that it represents the wooden audience hall of Shah Jahan.

For yurts in Mughal palace settings, see Andrews, Felt Tents and Pavilions, 21119–21, 1147–49, figs. 206 and 207, color pls. XI and XII; for his discussion of the tents and the architecture of the San Diego painting, see pp. 1172–74.

Andrews went to the extreme in calculating measurements of buildings and tents from their representations in Mughal painting: see, e. g., his discussion of Shah Jahani tents in ibid., 1156–210.

I have mentioned this in my discussion of the representation of architecture in the Windsor Pādshāhnāma: see Beach and Koch, King of the World, 191.

Measurements scaled from the plan of Mario Ferrante, “Čīhl Sutūn: Études, relevés, restauration,” in Travaux de restauration de monuments historiques en Iran, ed. Giuseppe Zander (Rome: IsMEO, 1968), 299, fig. 1; for the height of the columns, see p. 294.

Ahmad Nabi Khan, Uchchh: History and Architecture (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1980), 54–55, pl. IV (a and b), showing the columned hall of the tomb of Jalal al-Din Bukhari. A plan of the columned halls of the tomb and its mosque can be found in Kamil Khan Mumtaz, Architecture in Pakistan (Singapore: Concept Media, 1985), fig. 3.13. The hall of the tomb of Rajan Qattal is illustrated in Kamran Mufti, “Concept of Tomb Architecture at Uchchh,” in Sultanate Period Architecture: Proceedings of the Seminar on the Sultanate Period Architecture in Pakistan, Held in Lahore, November 1990, ed. Siddiq-a-Akbar, Abdul Rehman, and Muhammad Ali Tirmizi (Lahore: Anjuman Mimaran, 1991), fig. 15. The author assumes that the design of the columns with high impost blocks is influenced by Seljuk architecture. For a
The mosque was destroyed by fires and rebuilt several times; the plan seems to follow the original design but not the form of the columns: see Pratapaditya Pal, The Arts of Kashmir (New York: Asia Society, 2007), 132–35, figs. 141 and 142. Based on the drawings and information kindly provided by Sameer Hamdani, an architect at the Indian National Trust for Art and Culture (INTACH), Jammu & Kashmir Chapter, with whom I have had a fruitful exchange about the architecture of the valley, I would say that most of the columns of the preserved wooden architecture of Kashmir are inspired by the baluster column of Shah Jahan. They have a thin, elongated form with leaf decoration typical of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; some are also topped by a thin, elongated impost element, different from the heavier impost block of the type used in Shah Jahan's wooden audience hall. See INTACH, Jammu & Kashmir Chapter, Drawing NO CW/SH-01: “Types of Columns.”

For the wooden mosques of northwestern Iran, see Parviz Varajavand, “Chihil Sutūn-i Masjid-i Mullah Rustam, Marāğeh,” Barassīhā-yi Tārīkhi 61, 6 (1340 [1961–62]): 1–22; and “Chihil Sutūn-hā-yi pur-shukūh-i Bunāh,” Hunar va Mardam 162 (Farvardin 2535 [1975]): 5–9. He calls them chihil sutun. Markus Ritter, Moscheen und Madrasabauten in Iran 1785–1848: Architektur zwischen Rückgriff und Neuverwendung (Leiden: Brill, 2006), discusses hypostyle mosques in chapter 6 and pre-Qajar mosques, including wooden ones, in the introduction. I thank Markus Ritter for providing me with the photograph seen in my fig. 28.

Khas is a kind of scented grass (Andropogon muricatus) used in India to make mats that are put in the doors or windows of buildings and sprinkled with water to keep out the heat. For the text, see Zayn-al-Dīn Wafāʾī Khwāfī, Bāburnāma: Memoirs of Babur (PhD diss., Middle East Technical University, Ankara, 2010), ch. 5.

A variant of this type of column appears in stone in the later, permanent versions of the audience hall of Shah Jahan. See below.

Khas is a kind of scented grass (Andropogon muricatus) used in India to make mats that are put in the doors or windows of buildings and sprinkled with water to keep out the heat. For the text, see Zayn-al-Dīn Wafāʾī Khwāfī, Bāburnāma: Memoirs of Babur (PhD diss., Middle East Technical University, Ankara, 2010), chap. 5.

For related columns in stone, see Pratapaditya Pal, The Arts of Kashmir (New York: Asia Society, 2007), 132–35, figs. 141 and 142. Based on the drawings and information kindly provided by Sameer Hamdani, an architect at the Indian National Trust for Art and Culture (INTACH), Jammu & Kashmir Chapter, with whom I have had a fruitful exchange about the architecture of the valley, I would say that most of the columns of the preserved wooden architecture of Kash-


94. Ibid., 3:445, 503.


96. Babaie (*Isfahan and Its Palaces*, esp. 157–82) provides an extended discussion of the talār buildings of Isfahan, the roots of which she sees in the vernacular architecture of Mazandaran, an area in which, as she says, wood, open porches, and thatched roofs predominated. Shah ʿAbbas began to build palaces here at Farahabad and Ashraf in 1611–12; these included talārs, but nothing specific is mentioned about their form.

97. Ibid., 164–65.

98. See the literature cited in n. 3 above. Babaie (*Isfahan and Its Palaces*, 179–82, 188, 252–57, passim) is aware that Shah Jahan’s wooden halls predate the Safavid talār buildings, but she postulates an independent development at Isfahan that had its origin in the wooden architecture of Mazandaran.


100. For the orientation of Mughal art and culture towards Iran, see Ebba Koch, “How the Mughal Pādshāhs Referenced Iran in Their Visual Construction of Universal Rule,” in *Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*, ed. Peter Fibiger Bang and Dariusz Kołodziejczyk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 194–209. In the seventeenth century, the picture began to change, and even more so later, as the Safavids and the Qajars began to look to Mughal India. Not much work has been done on this issue because traditionally Iran is regarded as the source of inspiration of the Persian-speaking world and of societies shaped by Persian culture. The reversal of influence has been best researched for painting. While the dominant figures of Mughal painting were in the foundation-period painters that Humayun had brought from the court of Shah Tahmasp, Safavid painting of the seventeenth century shows clear inspiration from India—for instance, in the work of the painters Ali Quli Jabbadar, and Muhammad (Paolo?) Zaman. On the latter point, see, e. g., Eleanor G. Sims, “Five Seventeenth-century Persian Oil Paintings,” in *Persian and Mughal Art*, ed. B.W. Robinson (London: Colnaghi & Co. Ltd, 1976), 221–48, esp. pp. 228–30; and Abolala Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), 365–79.