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The Rise and Development of the Art of Calligraphy (From its Origins to the End of Yaqut's Era)

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The fine art of calligraphy developed as part of the Arabic writing system, spurred by the spread of Islamic civilization. With the advent of Islam, Arabic script developed swiftly and simultaneously in two directions. During the first two centuries after the Hijrah, on the one hand, it developed into a sophisticated written expression of the spoken language; on the other, it developed into an art that has remained vital to the present day.

Pre-Islamic Origins of Arabic Script

There are three views of the origins of the Arabic script itself. The first holds that the script was God-given (in Arabic, *tawqifi*) and that Adam invented all the world's scripts,¹ which he learned directly from God. Adam, this view holds, then wrote all the books, which were discovered by the various nations after the waters of the Flood receded. Each nation discovered its own books; thus Arabic was the lot of Ismail.² Traditions also list the names of the Arabs who later disseminated the script,³ sometimes crediting them with its invention.

¹ In these traditions the names of the prophets Idris and Nuh (Noah) are sometimes mentioned instead of Adam.

² It was believed that Ismail was "the first man to speak Arabic, forgetting his father's language." On such traditions and al-Jumahi's opinion, see al-Jumahi 1952, 9-10.

³ Al-Baladhuri 1956-1957, 3: 579-583; Al-Suli 1341, 28-31; Ibn Al-Nadim 1871, 4; Ibn Khallikan 1976, 3: 344; and Jawad Ali 1957, 7: 57-60.

The second view holds that Arabic script was derived from the *musnad*, also known as the Southern Arabic or Himyarite script.⁴ The *musnad* reached Syria and the regions of the Mundhirs very early, via the trading caravans that plied their way between the Yemenites and the Arabs of Syria, Iraq, and Northern Arabia. It later reached the Hijaz, either via the same routes or directly. This theory, based as it is on a logical view of the relations between early peoples, still has some adherents.⁵ It is not supported by currently available inscriptions, however, which shed some light on the various stages of development of Northern Arabic script.

The third view traces Arabic script back to the Nabataean. This view was voiced as early as 1724, when G.J. Klehr claimed a connection between the two scripts; later, in 1865, Th. Nöldeke also maintained that Arabic script developed from the Nabataean.⁶ Today, the study of pre-Islamic inscriptions and those belonging to the first century A.H. has established that Arabic script is indeed an offshoot of Nabataean cursive.⁷

In fact, Arabic script has a two-fold connection with the Phoenician: the Nabataean and the Aramaic. The earliest inscriptions showing the various stages of development from Nabataean cursive, which took place between the late third and the late fourth centuries A.D., are those unearthed in Umm al-Jimal (250 A.D.)⁸ and al-Namarah (328 A.D.).⁹ These inscriptions are Nabataean in language and script and commemorate an era in which Nabataean culture —albeit a peculiarly Arab form of

⁴ Ibn Khaldun 1960, 3: 950 and 952-953.

⁵ On this subject see Afifi, 1980, 62.

⁶ Grohmann 1971, 2: 11 and al-Juburi 1977, 51.

⁷ Al-Munajjid 1972, 60 and al-Juburi 1977, 51.

⁸ A gravestone found to the south of Hawran in east Jordan.

⁹ The inscription found thereon indicates that it is the gravestone of Imru al-Qays b. Amr, "King of the Arabs"; it was discovered near Hawran, south-east of Damascus.

that culture— was dominant. Also worth noting is the Zabad inscription, written in Greek, Syriac and Arabic (512 A.D.).¹⁰ This inscription shows that the Arabs preferred to use the Nabataean script and that by the early sixth century A.D., Arabic already commanded recognition as a written language. Setting aside the second Umm al-Jimal inscription, which probably belongs to the sixth century A.D., it would appear that at the time of the emergence of Islam, Arabic script was not substantially different from the script used for the Usays inscription (528 A.D.)¹¹ and the Harran inscription (568 A.D.).^{12, 13}

Beginning with al-Baladhuri (279 A.H./892 A.D.),¹⁴ al-Jahshiyari (331/942),¹⁵ al-Suli (335 or 336/947),¹⁶ and Ibn al-Nadim (385/995),¹⁷ Muslim authors report that the Arabic script reached al-Hirah from al-Anbar and then reached the Hijaz.¹⁸ Studies of the names and places mentioned in these reports and the interactions of the peoples involved give us reason to believe that the script moved from Hawran, a Nabataean district, to al-Anbar and al-Hirah and thence, through Dawmat al-Jandal, to the Hijaz. In the light of the unbroken trade relations between the Hijazis and the Syrians through the Nabataean territories, however, it is probable that the script of the Northern Arabs reached the Hijaz even earlier via a shorter route, from Hawran to Petra and thence to al-'Ula. The

¹⁰ Discovered in the ruins of a church in south-east Aleppo.

¹¹ Discovered in south-east Damascus.

¹² Discovered in south Damascus.

¹³ On the scriptural and linguistic characteristics of these inscriptions see Moritz 1965, 498-499; Fleische 1947, 96-97; Blachere 1952, I: 59-60; Jawad 1957, 7: 62. 68. 272-274; al-Munajjid 1972, 20-22; al-Juburi 1977, 43-48; and al-Naqshbandi, 83-101.

¹⁴ Al-Baladhuri 1956-1957, 2: 579.

¹⁵ Al-Jahshiyari 1938, 1:5.

¹⁶ Al-Suli 1341, 30.

¹⁷ Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 5.

¹⁸ For the purport of these traditions and a criticism thereof, see Jumah n.d., 11-18 and al-Juburi 1977, 63-73.

early reports' insistence on passage through al-Anbar and al-Hirah suggests that the script underwent a period of development in the Lakhmid environment around the middle of the sixth century A.D. These reports give us the names of those who first learned the script and then taught it to others. They include Bishr b. Abd al-Malik al-Kalbi, Abu Qays b. Abd Munaf b. Zuhrah, and Sufyan b. Umayyah and his brother Harb (Abu Sufyan's father), all of whom lived in the sixth century A.D. These reports indicate a movement to disseminate the Northern Arabic script in its al-Hirah form.

No extant documents belonging to the late pre-Islamic or early Islamic periods have been found. Historical sources specifically mention persons who were able to read and write, however. Ibn al-Nadim,¹⁹ for example, says that a document written by Abd al-Muttalib b. Hashim, the Prophet's grandfather, was preserved in al-Ma'mun's library. In addition, as Mecca was a trading center, there must have been some number of scribes who used not only Northern Arabic script but also the *musnad* employed in Yemen. Another source, al-Baladhuri, mentions twenty-four persons of that period who could read and write, seventeen men and seven women.²⁰ Literacy was less widespread among the Aws and Khazraj tribes of Yathrib, however; their children learned to read and write from "a Jewish man."²¹

Nevertheless, the sources suggest that pre-Islamic Arabs were more literate than many people have thought. Contemporary Jews and Christians had books in Hebrew and Syriac, and we can be sure there were Arabic texts as well. In addition to religious and apothegmatic texts, there were documents recording commercial accounts, debts, and loans; bonds authenticating ownership of slaves; treaties or agreements between tribes or persons; promises

¹⁹ Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 5, also quoted by al-Asad 1962, 54, and by al-Juburi 1977, 64-65. (He also knew the *Musnad*.)

²⁰ Al-Baladhuri 1956-1957, 3: 580-581.

²¹ Nevertheless, the number of literate people in these two tribes increased in the early period of Islam. al-Baladhuri 1956-1957, 3: 583 mentions seven of these, including Ubayy b. Ka'b and Zayd b. Thabit.

of safe conduct; chronicles of important events; letters; and the like.²²

By the early seventh century A.D., Arabic script in the Hijaz had acquired a distinctive style easily distinguishable from the styles used in al-Anbar and al-Hirah. It was the Hijaz style that was in use at the time of the Prophet.

Islam and Writing

The advent of Islam not only made writing necessary but extended its uses, thereby starting a new era in the history of writing. Writing became an integral part of the new Islamic social system in all its material and spiritual aspects. It became one of the most important instruments for solidifying the new faith, recording its sacred texts, instructing new converts, and spreading the message of Islam. The first half-century after the Hijrah saw a more rapid development in writing than there had been during the three preceding centuries combined. With the revelation of the first five Qur'anic verses beginning with the injunction "Read,"²³ Arabic writing acquired an aura of the sacred that it still has today. Other verses followed,²⁴ always linking writing with a divine source and enjoining its use, until it became an indispensable part of the life of all Muslims, men and women alike.

Enshrining revelation in writing, then, enhanced the sacred nature of writing itself. In addition, the Prophet continually urged his Companions to record information and to keep records. He also urged them to teach their children how to read and write, saying it was their unavoidable duty to do so. The Prophet's instructions regarding the ethics of writing and the forms the letters should

²² Al-Asad 1962, 60-74. With regard to views holding that the Arabs started to record their poetry which was regarded as *diwan ulumihim*= (the register of their culture), and record therefore, the traditions, genealogies, and chronicles already in the pre-Islamic period, see Eche.

²³ Holy Qur'an XCVI: 1-5.

²⁴ Holy Qur'an II: 282; LXVIII: I.

take in the Basmalah (that is, the phrase "In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate") are well known among Muslims.²⁵ We know today the names of more than forty of the Prophet's Companions who acted as secretaries, primarily to write down revealed Qur'anic texts. Some of these secretaries worked at specific locations and specialized in certain writing tasks, such as agreements or letters to be sent by the Prophet to the monarchs of the day. Some were proficient in other languages and scripts besides Arabic. Zayd b. Thabit, for example, learned Persian, Greek, Coptic, and Abyssinian from native speakers of those languages in Medina, and he translated the documents the Prophet received in those languages.²⁶ It is also certain that some of the Companions knew Hebrew and Syriac, in both spoken and written forms.²⁷

Arabic script still could not do justice to the spoken language, however. The fact that some of the Companions were aware of this inadequacy and knew other scripts was useful for the later reformation and improvement of Arabic script. But it is unwise to believe the Companions were perfect masters of Arabic script, especially before writing down and copying the *Holy Qur'an*, for they were trying both to improve the script and to increase their own knowledge. During this period of rapid development, a number of weaknesses and difficulties persisted in the script. These problems may be seen in the Companions' writings, which represent the highest level of accomplishment as well as the various stages of the script's development. These weaknesses cannot be considered defects, however, as Ibn Khaldun rightly observes.²⁸ Some modern scholars contest the authenticity of the Prophet's letters,²⁹ citing the scribal and orthographical errors

²⁵ Al-Kattani, n.d., 2: 239-240; al-Juburi 1977, 77; Afifi 1980, 83-85.

²⁶ Al-Baladhuri 1956-1957, 3: 581-582; Ibn Abd Rabbihi 1948-1950, 4: 161; al-Masudi 1938, 245-246; al-Kattani n.d. I: 129-243; al-Munajjid 1972, 23; and Afifi 1980, 85.

²⁷ Al-Juburi 1977, 150.

²⁸ Ibn Khaldun 1960, 3: 955.

²⁹ For the Prophet's epistles, see Hamidullah 1935, 1956 and 1966, 201-203, 208-

they contain. A cogent rebuttal can be found in Ibn Khaldun's description of the Companions' knowledge and mastery of the art of writing, his recognition of the circumstances in which they operated and his realistic acceptance of their imperfection, which in no way belittles their achievement.

Other measures also contributed to the spread of literacy, such as the edict that the literate polytheists of Mecca who had been captured at Badr could win their freedom by teaching Muslim children of Medina how to read and write. Each captive's ransom was to teach ten children. Thus Medina became the first center for the development of Arabic script after the advent of Islam. Writing increased in importance under the first four caliphs (known as the Righteous Caliphs) due to its growing use for religious and administrative purposes and for daily transactions. During the Caliph 'Umar b. al-Khattab's reign (13-23/634-644), schools were opened and teachers appointed.³⁰

The *Holy Qur'an* was the first text in the Islamic period to be reproduced in the form of a book with two covers (*mushaf*). This was done in order to maintain the accuracy of the *Holy Qur'an*, to protect the text against corruption or misreading, and to have it widely disseminated. In the days of the Prophet, the *Holy Qur'an* was written on various materials,³¹ but Zayd b. Thabit, one of the writers of revelation, collected these materials during the reign of Caliph Abu Bakr (11-13/632-634) and copied the *Holy Qur'an* onto uniform sheets (*suhuf*) of parchment or vellum,³² which were kept by Hafsah bint 'Umar. As the number of people who had learned the *Holy Qur'an* by heart diminished, especially during the early

212, 237-248, 256-269 (in Turkish). See also al-Munajjid 1972, 32-35 and al-Juburi 1977, 78-92 and the sources mentioned in these books.

³⁰ al-Kattani, 2: 293-294.

³¹ For writing materials used in the pre-Islamic period and early Islam see, e.g., al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 2: 475; Moritz 1965, 502-503; al-Kattani n.d., 2: 240-243; al-Asad 1962, 77-92; Harun 1965, 14-17; al-Halwaji 1978, 17-43; Amin 1986, 259-270; see also the chapters devoted to this subject in books on calligraphy and writing.

³² Al-Dani 1940 a, 2-3:8.

Muslim campaigns, differences began to appear in the reading of many Qur'anic passages. Caliph 'Uthman (reigned 2.3- 35/644-656) had a *mushaf* or written copy of the *Holy Qur'an*, prepared from Zayd b. Thabit's copy of the *Holy Qur'an*; this was later known as *al-mushaf al-Imam*, the master *mushaf*. He then ordered Zayd b. Thabit, Abd al-Rahman b. Amr b. al-Ass, Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr, Ibn Abbas, and Abd al-Rahman b. al-Harith b. Hisham to make one copy each so he might send the copies to the amsar, or the major cities of the state.³³ When the copies were finished, 'Uthman kept one copy and sent the others to Kufah, Basrah, and Damascus. According to some reports, copies also were sent to Mecca, Yemen, and Bahrain, together with an imam who could read.

These *mushafs* were written in black or brown ink on vellum. They had no diacritical markings and no decorations or special designs; the surahs were untitled, and the verses and parts unmarked.³⁴ They were written in what ancient authors called the Meccan and Medinan scripts, named for the places where these particular scripts developed. After its Anbar and Hirah stage, the Northern Arabic script moved to Mecca and, after the Hijrah to Medina, where it went through another phase of development. The Meccan and Medinan scripts did not differ substantially. One of their main features was—in the words of Ibn al-Nadim, who was quoting Muhammad b. Ishaq about the Basmalah he had presented—that its alifs inclined more toward the right of the hand and the tips of the fingers, with a slight reclining posture.³⁵ This brief description tells us something about

³³ Ibid., 4-6.

³⁴ Al-Dani 1960, 10-17, and al-Dani 1940 b, 124-125.

³⁵ Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 6, (It is common knowledge that the Basmalah in this book is printed in modern press letters.) See also Ibn al-Nadim 1971, 9; al-Munajjid 1972, 24; Déroche 1980, 209. A few documents have been discovered through the ancient *mushafs* and parts of *mushafs* discovered in the San'a Mosque. Their dates indicate that they go back to the times of the Umayyads. They clearly reflect the above-mentioned style. A selection of these documents appears in the first few plates of the book *Masahif San'a* (Kuwait, 1985).

the Hijazi form of the script and suggests that the script began to acquire distinctive features in the different cultural centers. Nevertheless, the individual letters still retained the main features they had a century earlier, and many words kept their Nabataean orthography.³⁶

An important point deserves to be mentioned here. Some scholars rightly believe that pre-Islamic Arabs recorded their chronicles and other cultural materials, especially poetry,³⁷ in writing. Such writings were no more than an aid to the memory, however. The preservation of this heritage from one generation to another owes much to the Arabs' prodigious memory: Even if early Arabs could identify the correct reading of simple texts using this script,³⁸ accurate reading of long and complex texts apparently required prior knowledge of the texts. The measures subsequently devised by Arabs to reform the script were, for the most part, intended to improve the writing of the *mushafs*. Later linguistic and literary texts had to wait for at least two centuries to receive such attention.

Reforming, Improving, and Embellishing Arabic Script

In the early years of Islam, Arabic script began to develop into two different types, according to the use it was put to and the instruments used in writing it. An angular script was used for inscriptions on stone and important documents written on vellum, especially the *mushafs*'. Papyrus and similar materials were used for documents relating to daily transactions and requiring speedy rather than serious attention, and a more supple, rounded form

³⁶ Absence of rawadif (غ ط ض ذ خ ث) and neglect of long alif (e.g., ملك and حرث instead of ملك and حارث), etc.

³⁷ On writing and recording in Arabic in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic period, see, e.g., Eche 1967, (see note 22) and al-Asad 1962, 46-134.

³⁸ The "tooth" representing the (ب) and similar letters in medial positions, for example, may be read in some cases in 30-35 different ways.

of script emerged for use with such documents. This second type of script, which had no artistic value at first, soon acquired greater importance and wider application in the offices of the first caliphs, who had served as scribes of the Prophet in his lifetime, and in the offices of their *walis* (governors) and regional deputies.³⁹ At the same time, with the expansion of Islam, Arabic script began to spread beyond the Arabian Peninsula into distant regions and to replace the scripts that had been in use in those regions.

Gradually, however, the absence of short vowels and of any way to differentiate otherwise identical letters was recognized as an inconvenience. The Arabs began looking for a way to correct these defects and thereby to safeguard the text of the *Holy Qur'an* from any possible misreading. The first step toward this end — and toward writing down Arabic grammar— was the effort of Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali (d. 69/688-689) to mark the *mushaf* with dots to denote pronunciation. As erroneous pronunciation (in Arabic, *lahn*) increased in the spoken language, and as the spoken language deviated more and more from classical Arabic (*fusha*), errors began to appear in the reading of the *Holy Qur'an*. Ziyad b. Abih (d. 53/673), the waif of Iraq, asked Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali to look into the matter. Abu al-Aswad read the *mushaf* to a scribe proficient in *fusha* and ordered him to mark the letters, one dot above a letter to denote fath (short *a*), one dot below a letter to denote kasr (short *i*), one dot beside the letter to denote damm (short *u*), and two dots to denote nunnation (or grammatical terminations ending in the letter nun).⁴⁰

³⁹ On the scribes of the Four Righteous Caliphs' period, see al-Jahshiyari 1938, 15-16, 21, 23, and Ibn Abd Rabbihi 1948-1950, 4: 163-164.

⁴⁰ The tradition regarding the biography of Abu al-Aswad and the nature of the service he rendered is repeated in books on dotting the Holy Qur'an and its orthography and on the classes of grammarians, particularly the preface and the introductory parts, and in similar compilations. It is also found in chapters devoted to his biography in the ancient books on linguistics, in treatises which compile the traditions on the rise and principles of grammar, and even in books concerned with misreading and mispronunciation. But this tradition was frequently embellished, especially in its incorporation of anachronistic terminology. A comparatively

By accurately vocalizing the entire *mushaf* in accordance with this system, Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali made an important contribution to the history of the Qur'anic text, Arabic grammar and script.⁴¹ But dotting (*i'jam*) that is adding vowel marks (*shakl*), which could also include dotting (*naqt*) and vowel points (*shakl*), was known to the Arabs before Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali, for dots were used above and below the letters in Hebrew and Syriac writings known to some of the Prophet's Companions. Tradition even tells us that the Companions and the first generation of Followers had already started to dot the *mushafs* and to mark groups of five and ten verses of the *Holy Qur'an*. They had not yet devised and applied a consistent system covering the entire *Holy Qur'an*, however; rather, they made "attempts at simplification," which were systematized by later Followers.⁴²

Some reports credit Nasr b. 'Asim al-Laythi (d. 89/707)⁴³ and Yahyab. Ya'mur (d. 129/746)⁴⁴ with having been the first to undertake dotting the *mushaf*, suggesting that these two men completed the work begun by Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali.⁴⁵ The latter's contribution appears not to have seen widespread application, for Abu Ahmad al-Askari says that for more than 40 years, Muslims

accurate form of the tradition may be found in Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 40, lines 5-12, a version quoted by al-Qifti 1369-1393, I: 5, lines 10-19. See also al-Dani 1960, 4: 6-7 and al-Dani, 1940 b, 124-25.

⁴¹ These brief explanations indicate that the text was not vocalized with the six symbols of Abu al-Aswad the way we do this today. The dammah, for example, was not placed above the joined letters in medial position. The vowel points, however, were always given at the end of the word (to indicate the *i'rab* or the pronunciation of case endings). It appears, therefore, that Abu al-Aswad's main purpose was to establish the *i'rab*. His doing so in a long text containing all points of grammar like the *Holy Qur'an* must have led to the deduction of the basic grammatical rules and hence to the rise of this science.

⁴² Al-Dani 1960, 2-3, 15, lines 17-18.

⁴³ Ibid. 6, lines 4-5, 7, lines 13-14.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 5 and al-Dani 1940 b, 125.

⁴⁵ Other names mentioned in this context include Abd Allah b. Abu Ishaq (127/745), the teacher of Abu Amr b. al-Ala. See al-Dani 1960, 7, line 12.

continued to read the mushafs that had been copied for 'Uthman b. Affan. When erroneous readings (*tashif*) proliferated⁴⁶ especially in Iraq during the days of Caliph Abd al-Malik b. Marwan (65-86/685-705), al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf al-Thaqafi (d. 95/714), the wali of Iraq, asked his scribes to add diacritical marks (that is, dots) to differentiate between letters that looked alike but denoted different sounds. This task was undertaken by Nasr b. Asim.⁴⁷ Thus the second important stage in the reformation of the Arabic script again involved dotting the *mushafs* after Abu al-Aswad. Note that in both these stages, the reformation was concerned with the script as a system of writing, rather than with its appearance.

In addition, some reports even push the process back as far as the beginnings of the Anbar and Hirah period.⁴⁸ Disregarding these reports, and the comments of some pre-Islamic poets⁴⁹ we can find clear indications that some letters were dotted during the lifetime of the Prophet, who asked Mu'awiyah, one of his scribes, to dot his letters (*raqsh al-huruf*). Asked by Mu'awiyah what *raqsh* meant, the Prophet said it meant dotting the letters with the necessary number of dots to distinguish letters that were otherwise identical.⁵⁰ We also understand from another piece of advice by the Prophet⁵¹ that the letters ب and ت were dotted at the time. Extant documents likewise make it clear that dotted letters existed in the first half of the first century after the Hijrah —long

⁴⁶ *Tashif* is misreading due to difference in vocalization or dotting, e.g., al-Shajari (الشجري) instead of al-Sijzi (السجزي), *arus* (عروس), instead of *urūsh* (عروش). On this topic see al-Askari 1975, and al-Suyuti 1326, 2: 357.

⁴⁷ Al-Askari 1975, I:14, and, quoting him, Ibn Khallikan 1976, 2: 32, and quoting the latter, Tashköprüzade 1968, I:89 (where after the name of Nasr has been mentioned, we find the statement "wa qila 'Yahya b. Ya'mur" (other reports give the name Yahya b. Ya'mur).

⁴⁸ Al-Dani 1960, 35; al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 3: 155, lines 3-6.

⁴⁹ Al-Asad 1962, 100-103; al-Juburi 1977, 155-156.

⁵⁰ Hamidullah 1964, 3: 26-27, and, quoting him, al-Munajjid 1972, 126.

⁵¹ Al-Munajjid 1972, 126.

before the time of Nasr b. 'Asim and Yahya b. Ya'mur. In a papyrus belonging to the 22nd year after the Hijrah⁵² we can still see dots on the ذ، ز، ش، خ and the ن (both at the beginning of a word and in the middle of it). Moreover, an inscription dated 58 A.H.⁵³ has dots on the ب، ت، ث and ی (again, both at the beginning of a word and in the middle). These dots were not always used, however; they were used only where deemed necessary. At first, dots and vowel markers (*naqt and shakl*) were used even at the time of writing down the revelation, although their use was limited. Later, the Companions removed all such markings from the *mushaf*.⁵⁴ When it appeared there was danger of misreading the text of the Holy Qur'an and making orthographical mistakes (*lahn and tashif*), the Companions added first the vowel markers, then the dots.

Originally, the dots added by Abu al-Aswad to denote the short vowels were round in shape and written in red ink to distinguish them from the black or brown ink of the text. But when marks were added to differentiate similar letters, there was potential for confusion. To clarify the situation, these marks were written as horizontal lines or, more commonly, as lines that inclined slightly from right to left. These lines were considered part of the letter and were written in black or brown ink.⁵⁵

Accurate reading and "accurate writing" of the Holy Qur'an were no doubt inseparable. Hence, the measures taken to ensure accurate reading led to the improvement of writing as well. For example, with the exception of the marks used to differentiate between similar letters, all the dots and marks added to facilitate accurate reading were written in a different color than the text. In fact, since the late first century and early second century A.H., specific colors of ink were used for the marks in *mushafs* copied

⁵² Ibid., 37-38; al-Juburi 1977, 157-159, plate 12.

⁵³ Al-Munajjid 1972, 101-103; al-Juburi 1977, 157-160, plate 34.

⁵⁴ Al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 3: 155.

⁵⁵ Al-Dani 1960, 43.

in some parts of the Islamic world, especially in küfiscritps. In Medina, for example, dots denoting short vowels and marks denoting doubling (tashdid) or elision (takhfif), which were added later, were written in red ink, while the dots denoting the hamzah were written in yellow ink. 'Iraqi scholars used red ink for the hamzah, while some scholars of Kufah and Basrah used different colors, sometimes including green, to denote standard (*mashhur*), irregular (*shadhdh*), and discarded (*matruk*) readings. North African as well as Andalusian scholars followed the practice of Medina and gave hamzah al-wasl at the beginning of a word a green or azure dot.⁵⁶

When the first copies of the Holy Qur'an were made, however, some Muslims had reservations about these additions —even if they were in different color inks. Malik b. Anas (d. 179/795), for example, is said to have been asked several times to give his opinion on this matter and was always opposed to the practice. He did not mind the use of the markings in writings intended for the instruction of children, however.⁵⁷

At first, this sincere effort to preserve the text of the Holy Qur'an, as it was copied during the reign of Caliph 'Uthman, from corruption went hand in hand with efforts to prevent misreading and orthographical mistakes, al-Khalil b. Ahmad (d. 175/791), a contemporary of Malik b. Anas, made a tremendous contribution in this regard. Not only did he permit dotting the mushafs under

⁵⁶ For more details on the colours employed for these signs and on the methods that appeared in the various centres, see al-Dani 1960, 19-20, 23-24, 42-43, 86-88. All these attempts were connected with the mushaf. As for inscriptions and other documents from the Umayyad period, no orthographic signs or vowel points appear except the dot.

⁵⁷ Malik b. Anas was of the opinion that the mushaf should generally preserve the form it was recorded in the days of the Caliph Uthman b. Affan. He disapproved of the prefatory material given at the head of surahs but did not object to dividing the surahs into groups of ten verses by adding a sign at the end of every tenth verse or to indicating the end of each surah by means of a chainlike circle even though by using black ink, in the plates or mushafs used for teaching children. See al-Dani 1960, 11, 13, 15, 17; al-Dani 1940, 9-10, and al-Dani 1940 b, 125.

certain conditions, but he also introduced other refinements, including using smaller forms of the alif (*reclining*) and the waw and recursive elongated ya' instead of the earlier vowel marks, which were circular dots.⁵⁸ He also used small letters to symbolize words in orthography, such as using shin to denote tashdid or doubling. Among his other important contributions were the introduction of marks denoting the *hamzah*, *rawm* (slurring of the final vowel), and *Akman* (use of a vowel sound that partakes of the *kasra* and the *dammah* in certain positions).⁵⁹ His book on this science, *Kitabal-Naqtwa al-Shakl* (Book of Dotting and Vocalization), is no longer extant.⁶⁰

Al-Khalil's efforts were not confined to perfecting the existing system and devising his own diacritical marks. He pursued a similar line in systematizing morphology and grammar, contributing to lexicography, formulating and explaining the principles of prosody, and working in the field of music. In all these areas, he collected what was known; subjected this body of knowledge to critical study; corrected, completed, and rearranged his material; defined its terms; and put it together as a science in itself or a branch of a more comprehensive science. As we have mentioned elsewhere,⁶¹ al-Khalil had a remarkable mind that could easily detect the most delicate and intricate relations among seemingly diverse problems and link them to sound principles and a comprehensive system. Although he has not been given the recognition he deserves in history of philology al-Khalil must be considered, by even the most cautious standards, the greatest philologist ever to appear in the Islamic world. He identified the common starting points of his work in the various fields of language and literature, and his insights are as valid today as they were in his time. His research on prosody, aimed at identifying and

⁵⁸ Makhzumi 1960, 38, 106-107.

⁵⁹ Al-Dani 1960, 6-7, and al-Dani 1940 b, 125.

⁶⁰ Ibn al-Nadim 1971, 49; al-Dani 1960, 9; al-Qifti 1369-1393, I: 346.

⁶¹ Küçük Türk İslâm Ansiklopedisi 1978, 1: 183.

analyzing the internal rhythms of Arabic verse; his investigations regarding the best ways to study the structure of Arabic in his work on morphology and syntax; and his reformation of the writing system by systematizing orthography and devising the diacritical marks as safeguards against misreading—all this work was undertaken at the same time and based on the same principles.

The Role of the Diacritical Signs

Thus, the Arabic script became a fully developed system. The vowel markers and other diacritical signs, which became part of the Arabic writing system after al-Khalil, played a role in the development of the art of calligraphy in their capacity as decorative elements. Ancient manuscripts indicate that most of these marks took their final shape in stages. The forms of the fathah, kasrah, and dammah did not change much; nor did nunnation with the fathah or kasrah. Nunnation with the dammah, however, seems to have begun as $\overset{\cdot}{\text{ـ}}$ or $\overset{\cdot}{\text{ـ}}$ then changed into $\overset{\cdot}{\text{ـ}}$ until it took its present shape of $\overset{\cdot}{\text{ـ}}$. Before the time of al-Khalil, the letter (the second letter of the word or shaddah) was used to symbolize doubling. This letter, like the other diacritical marks, was placed above or below the appropriate letter, using a finer pen than the one used for the text. It was written according to the vowel, as follows:⁶²

Shaddah and fatha

Shaddah and kasrah

Shaddah and dammah

The letter dal also took the form of a small arc; it was first written by means of dots indicating vowel points, but these were later dropped:

⁶² Al-Dani 1960, 50.

Shaddah and fathah
 Shaddah and kasrah
 Shaddah and dammah
 Shaddah and fathah
 Shaddah and kasrah
 Shaddah and dammah

The first to use the *dal* as a *shaddah* were the scholars of Medina, from whom the North Africans took it. The forms $\hat{}$, $\check{}$, and $\hat{}$, with the first and last signs being sharply angular, have continued to be characteristic of North African script. (Maghrib).

As for the other orthographic signs, the ' and its ancient form was used for the *sükun* (or absence of a vowel between two consonants), which seems to be the first letter of the word *جزم*, (*jazm*) or, more probably, the first letter of the word *خفيف*, (*khafif*) and was placed on letters with no hamzah. Earlier examples of the *wasl* (elision of the *alif*) and the *madd* (elongation of the *alif*) may also point to the origins of orthographic signs and their meaning. These two signs were written as *صل* and *مد* above the letter, using a fine pen. The first means that the letter is unpronounced, the second, that the letter is long. The *shaddah* must also have been written as *سد* in the beginning, meaning that the letter is doubled. Long vowels⁶³ were treated as having a *sükun* taking the vowel point of the preceding letter. They were written as follows: a: $\bar{}$, i: $\bar{}$, u: $\bar{}$. The *hamzah*, however, was the most problematic and, for a long time, it continued to be written in various forms. As mentioned above, the initial long *alif* was written as a letter with a short vowel, followed by a letter with a *sükun*, thus: it was even written as:

The measures taken to perfect the writing system in order to

⁶³ In his analysis of the internal structure of Arabic verse rhythm, al-Khalil observed the succession of vocalized and unvocalized letters of the written form of the verse and was able to isolate the long vowels in the above-mentioned way.

do justice to the language and to forestall misreading left no letter in the alphabet (alifba) without its own distinctive mark. Dotted or pointing of similar letters, for example, removed possible confusion, as in ب, ت, ث, د, ذ, س, ش, ط, ظ etc.

Undotted letters were given other signs to prevent confusion. Thus, the letters ر and س were given the superscript ...or v or v. The letter ح was given a smaller ح or .. , > beneath it. The letter ص was given a smaller beneath it and the marks ... ,or ... above it. The letter ط was given a smaller ط beneath it, and the letter ع was given a smaller or shortened ع beneath it: ءع

As for ك, which was inclined to the left and thus distinct from ل to begin with, it was given an extra sign, ك, so that the letter was written كلك. This small additional sign developed into a horizontal line rather early; today, it is called the stroke of the kaf. When it was written alone or at the end of the word, it became smaller and started to look like a small kaf or even like a hamzah.

Finally ه was also provided with a small sign, ه, below it to indicate that it was not a ta' marbutah (آ, ة) with the dots left off. The letters د and ط were also dotted below, but this was rarely done with the letters ر and ص.

These scribal or orthographic features chosen from several early documents other than the *mushafs* illustrate how the Arabic script was being closely linked with the written language.⁶⁴ In fact,

⁶⁴ In connection with this topic, we consulted the following MSS:

a) Al-Farazdaq's Diwan copied by Abu al-Tayyib Ahmad b. Ahmad al-Warraq, known as Ibn Akht al-Shafi'i (al-Shafi'i's nephew), in 331/943 from a version in the hand of al-Sukkari (275/888). A facsimile of this version, whose original, bearing no. 8800, is located in the Zahiriyah Library and was published by the Academy of Arabic Language (Damascus, 1385/1965). In his introduction to this edition, Shakir al-Fakhkhani describes the orthographic and calligraphic characteristics of this version (pp. 4-7) and gives information derived from al-Hamawi 1936, 2: 137 about the copyist, who was the warraq (bookseller) of al-Jahshiyari (331/943).

b) A copy of al-Muqfaclab by Abu al-Abbas al-Mubarrad (285/898) copied in

it would be virtually impossible to misread a text written in this alphabet and with these orthographic rules, which were developed by Muslim scholars who were meticulously systematizing and transmitting the sciences of their time. The modern vowel markers and orthographic signs are the result of reasonable simplification of this highly detailed system of writing.

Some people have considered reading and writing without the diacritical marks, especially the vowel markers, a sign of

Baghdad by Muhalhil b. Ahmad in 347/958 [8], This rare copy was first described by Rescher 1910, 197-207, and by Ritter 1953, 67-68 (Plates II, III). The book was published based on this single MS copy (Cairo, 1385-1388), but the publisher did not mention its calligraphic and orthographic peculiarities. There is another recent description of the MS in Şeşen 1986, 2: 172-177. See also note) 10 below.

c) Abu Abd Allah Muhammad b. al-Abbas al-Yazidi (d. 310/922), *Kifah al-Amalr*. (İstanbul, Aşir Efendi Library, No. 904 [12]j. It was copied in 370/980 by Abu Abd Allah Muhammad b. Asad al-Bazzaz, Ibn al-Bawwab's master. The book was published, based on this copy in Hyderabad (Deccan) in 1367/1948. There is nothing in the introduction to this edition about the calligraphic or orthographic characteristics of this copy. On the copyist Ibn Asad see notes 111 and 112 below.

d) A copy of Abu Sa'id al-Sirafi's (368/979), book *Akbbar al-Nahwiyyin al-Basriyyin* copied by AH b. Shadhan al-Razi in 376/986 (İstanbul, Şehid Ali Paşa Library, No. 1842). It was published by F. Krenkow in Beirut, 1936. A mushaf copied by AH b. Shadhan al-Razi is extant today.

e) An anthology copied by al-Hasan b. AH al-Siqilh al-Nahwi (d. 391/1001) in 386/996 containing *Kitab al-Mudhakkar wa al-Mu'annath* by Abu Hatim al-Sijistani (255/868-869), the great philologist from Basra and *Kitab al-Maqsur wa al-Mamdud* by Ibn al-Wallad (d. 332/943)-. (Konya, Yusuf Ağa Library, No. 254) The book was first described in the following: Ateş 1952, 59, 62-63. Çetin 1956, 96-97. See also note 102 below.

f) Hassan b. Thabit's *Diwan* (İstanbul, TSMK HI. Ahmed, No. 2534). The *Diwan* was copied in 419 A H. from a version bearing a reading record dated 255.

g) *Kitab al-Mudhakkar wa al-Muannath* by Abu Bakr b. al-Anbari (328/940), (İstanbul, Beşir Ağa Library, No. 179). It was copied by Hibat Allah b. al-Hasan b. Ya'qub al-Katib in 520/1126 and was read to Mawhub b. Ahmad al-Jawaliqi in the same year. This copy is a marvelous example of books preserved from al-Jawaliqi's circle, for he had revived the traditions of the third and fourth centuries A.H. in writing, teaching, and transmission of traditions, and revived the orthographic practices of those eras. For a description of this copy, see Çetin 1956, 103-104. The book was published in Baghdad in 1978; see the introduction therein by Dr. Tariq Abd Awn al-Jannabi, p. 68.

education and intelligence.⁶⁵ Consequently, they consider the use of these marks an insult to their intelligence. But it is unfair of those who seek ways to reform the Arabic script to quote previous intellectuals, such as the poet Abu Nuwwas and others, in support of their convictions.

The Era of the Balanced Scripts, al-Khatt al-Mavzun

With the advent of Islam, the Arabic script not only began to be perfected as a writing system, it also began to develop as an art form. The second development started to take shape during the Umayyad period. The generally horizontal lines and angular form of early script reserved mainly for the *Holy Qur'an*⁶⁶ was known as the *kufi* script, so named for its development in Kufah after its beginnings in Damascus. The term *kufi* acquired several subsidiary characteristics that varied with time and place, but it became the common name for scripts with certain basic characteristics. The art of calligraphy found its real outlet, however, in the more rounded form of script (*mustadir*) mentioned above. Although the rounded

⁶⁵ For the poem the famous poet Abu Nuwwas (d. 198/813) wrote on the occasion of receiving a fully dotted and vocalized letter, see al-Suli 1341, 61 and the poet's *Diwan* 1898, 408-409. In that poem Abu Nuwwas says:

O writer, you have written a letter in my abuse.

(and who can endure writers' cleverness?):

Not only did you fully dot the letter.

but parsed it and vocalized it accordingly.

Did you think it would be misunderstood,

or did you distrust my ability to read it?

Had you severed the letters one from the other,

leaving them totally unrelated.

I would still have understood your intent perfectly.

Similar to this is the following from al-Abbas b. al-Ahnaf:

The writer of this letter abuses me

intentionally by exaggerating and over dotting.

if you wish, I learned from the dotting;

you seem to have thought I wouldn't understand.

⁶⁶ See, e.g., Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 6-7. The author devoted whole chapters to the scripts used in the mushafs and their copyists.

form was reserved at first for unimportant documents of daily transactions, it soon acquired certain characteristics that made it suitable for official business under the Umayyads in Damascus. There it was adopted by clerks responsible for keeping official records and composing the ever-increasing official administrative correspondence; by compilers, translators, and copyists involved in the growing endeavor of writing and translating books: by the new profession of booksellers (*warraqs*);⁶⁷ and by scholars employed as librarians in the libraries that were already starting to appear.

The earliest artist mentioned by our sources is Khalid b. Abu al-Hayyaj, who flourished in the days of Ali's caliphate and under the Umayyads. This artist wrote twenty-four surahs comprising ninety-three verses, beginning with surah XCI (The Sun) and continuing through the end of the *Holy Qur'an*. He wrote them in gold on the wall of the qiblah in the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. In addition, Sa'd, keeper of the *mushafs* (that is, the custodian of the first known organized library in the Islamic world), commissioned Abu al-Hayyaj to copy *mushafs*, traditions, and verses on behalf of Caliph al-Walid b. Abd al-Malik (reigned 86-96/705-715). Ibn al-Nadim reports that he saw a *mushaf* in Abu al-Hayyaj's handwriting.⁶⁸

Another early artist was Abu Yahya Malik b. Dinar (d. 131/748-749), known as al-Warraq (the bookseller or stationer)⁶⁹ who used

⁶⁷ On the *warraqs* and their profession see note 95 below.

⁶⁸ On Khalid see Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 6 and, quoting him, al-Qifti 1369-1393, 1: 8. Although the translator of the *Fihrist* into English says that it was not possible to ascertain the identity of the above-mentioned Sa'd or the claim that he might have been one of the leading figures of Damascus, Eche, on the strength of what he has found in Ibn al-Nadim 1871 and al-Sam'ani (see also Ibn al-Athir, 1357-1359, 2: 145, says that the appellation "al-Masahifi" means that Sa'd was the keeper of the *mushafs* in the library of Caliphs Abd al-Malik (d. 96/714). Thus, he was the first librarian in the Islamic world whose identity has been ascertained. (See Eche 1967, 18).

⁶⁹ Ibn Qutaybah 1960, 470-577; al-Bayhaqi 1902, 108; Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 6; and Ibn Khallikan 1976, 4: 139-140.

to copy *mushafs* on commission. After these two came Qutbah al-Muharrir (d. 154/771),⁷⁰ the earliest artist to be called *muharrir*, a term that distinguished the artist from the scribe and the earliest epithet applied to calligraphers.⁷¹ It was only at a later date that the word *khattat*, or calligrapher, replaced the word *muharrir*.

Ibn al-Nadim says Qutbah produced four *qalams* (pens, or scripts), but he does not mention their names or describe their characteristics. The *qalam al-tumar* must have been one of them, however, as it means the width of the "grand pen" (*qalam al-jalil*), which was in use before Qutbah; in other words, the name of the script denoted the width of the pen used for large lettering and, consequently, the size of the letters. The *qalam al-tumar* was also used as the basis for determining the thickness of the various smaller pens, which were soon standardized. The term *tumar* refers to a certain size of sheet made of vellum, papyrus, and, later, paper (*kaghid*). It can be assumed, therefore, that Qutbah was the first to determine the proper thickness of letters according

⁷⁰ Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 7.

⁷¹ Early calligraphers with distinctive styles were at first called "musharris" and fine writing was called *tahrir*. In *Kawaid-i Hüsn-i Hat*, a treatise written by Tokadlı İmam Mehmed Efendi (d. 1052 A.H.), one of the calligraphers of the age of the Ottoman Sultan Murad IV, the author uses the word *yazar*, the Turkish word for writer, in talking about the great calligraphers like Ibn al-Bawwab and Yaqut. This means that the Turkish "yazar" was equivalent to the Arabic word "muharrir" meaning *khattat*. Here it may be worthwhile to correct an important error. İmam Mehmed Efendi's treatise was published in a facsimile edition in Damascus (no date) by Erzurumlu Mustafa Najatuddin Efendi under the title of *Sülis Yazısı Rehheri*, i.e., Guide for the Thuluth Script, and the subtitle: "A valuable treatise composed by the late Sayyid Mehmed Majdi Efendi in 1278." The author's name and the date of composition mentioned in the printed version are in reality the name of the copyist and the date of the completion of the copy used for that edition. (On the word *yazar*, i.e., calligrapher, see p. 8 of this edition.) Of this treatise several manuscripts are extant, and a beautiful copy dated 1119, is found in the Topkapı Sarayı Library, İstanbul (R, 1505). (See Karatay 1962-1969, 2: 4). For the term "muharrir" see notes 147 and 148 below. According to the late Nihad M. Çetin, this risale belongs to Tokadlı İmam Mehmed Efendi. (Editor's note: However, recent researches conducted after Çetin passed away show that it was copied by Mehmed bin Taceddin (d. 996/1588), a previous calligrapher. See Tüfekçioğlu 1997).

to the size of the sheet they were written on.

The sizes of the other three unnamed scripts attributed by Ibn al-Nadim to Qutbah were determined in relation to the *tumar*. The deciding factor was the nature of the official and administrative affairs of state being transcribed. The *tumar*, the largest of the standard sizes, was reserved for the Umayyad Caliphs' decrees (*alamat*), for it was deemed desirable to have proclamations issued from the caliph's office written in letters that would be easily distinguishable from those used by other offices or by the common people. Reports have it that al-Walid b. Abd al-Malik (86-96/705-715) was the first to introduce this practice, but 'Umar b. Abd al-Aziz (99-102/717-720) did not use large letters because they required too much paper.⁷² This economizing was abandoned after him, however, and the *tumar* was used again, especially in letters sent by the caliphs and the later Muslim monarchs and rulers to other monarchs. During the Umayyad period, then, we can conclude that the sizes of papers used for different kinds of documents were standardized, as were the sizes of letters and pens.

Toward the end of the Umayyad period and the beginning of the Abbasid period, two men from Damascus developed the calligraphic art begun by Qutbah to such an extent that Qutbah was soon forgotten. The first was al-Dahhak b. Ajlan al-Katib, a contemporary of the Caliph al-Saffah (132-136/749-754); the second was Ishaq b. Hammad al-Katib, who flourished during the days of al-Mansur (136-158/754-775) and al-Mahdi (158-169/775-785) and had many apprentices.⁷³ These two artists were said to be masters of the "grand script" (*qalam al-jalil*), which al-Qalqashandi and Ibn al-Sa'igh rightly identify as the *tumar* script or something very close to it. Ishaq b. Hammad's apprentices included many important contributors to the rapid growth of the art of calligraphy. The details of their lives remain unknown to us,

⁷² Al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 3: 53.

⁷³ On al-Dahhak and Ishaq see al-Baghdadi 1952-1954, 128; Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 7 (here, fifteen of Ishaq's students are mentioned); al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 3: 16; Ibn al-Sa'igh 1981, 42.

however, and even their names are uncertain; among them were Ibrahim al-Sijzi (or al-Shajari), Yusuf Laqwah, the female slave Thana' al-Katibah, and Ahmad b. Abu Khalid.

Ibrahim al-Sijzi,⁷⁴ for example, having mastered the *jalil* script he was taught by his master, added two scripts that were narrower than the *tamar*, which he called the "two-thirds," or *thuluthayn* (الثلاثين) and "one-third," or *thuluth* (الثلث) scripts, so named for their size in relation to the width of the *tumar*. His brother, the writer and poet Yusuf Laqwah,⁷⁵ added a script called the "heavyish halfsize," or *nisf al-thaqil* (النصف الثقيل), later known as the signature script, or *qalam al-tawqiat* (قلم التوقيعات). The vizier al-Fadl b. Sahl —or Dhu al-Riyasatayn, he of the two premierships (d. 202/818)— admired this script and called it the *Uyaf*.⁷⁶

The Vizier Abu al-Abbas Ahmad b. Abi Khalid Yazid b. Abd al-Rahman al-Ahwai (in office 203-212/818-827)⁷⁷ was one of the writers admired by al-Ma'mun. According to one story,⁷⁸ Ibn al-Tarjuman, who was delegated by al-Wathiq (reigned 227-232/842-847) to the Byzantine monarch, saw a letter written by Ahmad b. Abu Khalid al-Ahwal exhibited among the king's precious possessions. We can confidently say this story is mistaken, however, for the most important calligrapher to appear in the time of al-Ma'mun (198-218/813-833) was al-Ahwal al-Muharrir; the little we know

⁷⁴ Al-Baghdadi 1952-1954, 118 (in the form Ibrahim b. al-Sijzi), note 3; al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 3: 16 (in the form "Ibrahim al-Shajari).

⁷⁵ On him see al-Baghdadi 1952-1954, 119; Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 7; al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 16; Ibn al-Sa'igh 1981, 43; also see al-Marzubani 1969, 504; al-Isfahani 1972, 20: 93-96; and al-Hamawi n.d., 20: 59-60.

⁷⁶ In view of what al-Qalqashandi (and Ibn al-Sa'igh following him), say, one of the later authors says that this pen was later known as *qalam al-tawqi'af* (the signature pen). See references cited in the previous note.

⁷⁷ On him see Ibn Khallikan 1976, 2: 123, 521-522, 3: 475; Ibn Abd Rabbihi 1948-1950, 1: 29. 2: 274.

⁷⁸ Al-Suli 1341. 45; al-Tawhidi 1951, 36; and, for a similar story regarding Ibn Muqlah, see al-Athari 1958, 57-58.

about him comes from one obscure report.⁷⁹ Ibn al-Nadim says the caliph used to commission this man to write letters on the *tumar* to send to foreign monarchs. The similarity in name and in soubriquet, and the fact that the two were contemporaries, made it easy to confuse them even in ancient times. Both Abri al-Qasim al-Baghdadi and al-Qalqashandi report that al-Ahwal al-Muharrir, having mastered the *thuluthayn* and the *thuluth* at the hands of his master Ibrahim al-Sijzi invented the "half" script, or *qalam al-nisf* (قلم النصف) based on the "grand" script reserved for the *tumar*. He also invented the "light half," *khafif al-nisf* (خفيف النصف) and the "light third," or *khafif al-thuluth* (خفيف الثلث), which were more delicate versions of *thuluth* and *nisf*. To this artist were attributed eleven scripts in all, which include, in addition to those mentioned above, *musalsal* (مسلسل), in which the letters are linked); *khatt al-mu'amarat* (خط المؤامرات); and *khatt al-qasas* (خط القصص). He is the best representative of calligraphy during the period between Qutbah al-Muharrir and Ibn Muqlah.

This brief survey shows a four-step evolution in calligraphy:

1. The artists first considered the most suitable pen sizes for the various paper sizes, using the width of the largest pen tip as a baseline against which to measure other pens. Thus they had a 2/3 pen, a 1/2 pen, a 1/3 pen, and so on. They also made smaller pens suitable for smaller-sized paper.
2. They reserved specific thicknesses of line for various sizes of paper for use in the *diwans*, government offices, and other fields.
3. The scripts written by various pens for different purposes acquired special characteristics and began to be differentiated.

⁷⁹ Al-Jahshiyari 1938, 45-47 (quoting *Baday' al-Bidayah*); Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 8-9; al-Hamawi n.d. 4: 126-127; al-Safadi 1981, 8: 300-301, no. 3717. They all repeat the same story except Ibn al-Nadim.

Thus, the *musalsal* (unbroken script) attributed to al-Ahwal al-Muharrir denoted both a special style and a special thickness of line. The use of the term *khattat* (script) instead of *qalam* (pen), as in *khatt al-qisas* and *khatt-mua'marat*⁸⁰ illustrates this point.⁸¹

4. The question of size was not limited to the proportions of width in relation to the point of the pen, which gave us the 2/3, the 1/2, and the 1/3. The artists also talked about thickness (*thaqil*) and thinness (*khafif*), which opened the way to the appearance of subsidiary sizes. Al-Ahwal al-Muharrir was well-versed in the various lettering styles that had appeared before him and the rules and laws governing their shape, and it is quite likely that he wrote a treatise on the subject.

It is worth pointing out that the use of pens of standard size in all kinds of scripts, *kufi* or *mustadir* (rounded), opened up new possibilities for the art of calligraphy, especially the rounded scripts. Ibn al-Nadim listed twenty-four different sizes of pens in use in his time and described the kinds of scripts they were used for and their relative proportions to each other. As for the width of the pens and the lines they produced, the tip of the grand pen reserved for the *tumar* was as wide as 24 hairs of a workhorse's tail laid side by side⁸² (one hair is estimated to be about 625 mm; 24 would be 15 mm). The *alif* written with such a pen was 24x24—576 hairs in height (approximately 360 mm).⁸³ The sizes of the three other basic pens were as follows:

⁸⁰ Ibn al-Nadim 1871, for example, mentions him under *qalam*; in al-Baghdadi, 1952-1954, 129 and al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 3: 16, he is mentioned under *khatt*. But later the word *qalam* was more often used to indicate a style of writing, as in the phrase "the six pens", and the word *thuluth* lost its reference to proportion, which it had signified in the beginning.

⁸¹ Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 7-8; 13-14.

⁸² Muhammad Abd al-Qadir Abd Allah says it is a hair of a Turkistani horse's tail. (Abd Allah 1968, 101). But, he does not mention his source.

⁸³ Al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 2: 454-455, 3: 52-53; Grohmann, 1963, xii and al-Juburi 1977, 132-134.

	Two-thirds	One-half	One-third
Tip	16 hairs (10 mm)	12 hairs (7.5 mm)	8 hairs (5 mm)
Alif	16x16=256 hairs (256x625=160)	12x12=144 hairs (144x625=90 mm)	8x8=64 hairs (64x625=40mm)

These widths indicate the widths of the lines made when the arithmetical proportions of the tips are constant. Notice that the height of the *alif* and consequently the size of the other letters and the horizontal lengths of the reclining letters, are determined by squaring the width of the tip. Thus the width of the half script is one-fourth the length of its *alif* in spite of the fact that the width of the pen tip is half that of the *tumar*.

In other words, scripts that varied primarily according to the size of the pens soon acquired different characteristics as well, especially with regard to the varying proportions of the thickness of the lines and the length of the perpendicular and horizontal lines of some letters. Thus, new styles appeared that later were reserved for different purposes. "The original and balanced scripts" (*al-khutut al-asliyyahwa al-mawzunah*) was the name of the scripts invented by the artists mentioned above. They developed these scripts in accordance with proportions that satisfied their tastes, temperaments, and aesthetic judgment, under the patronage of the Abbasid caliphs and their viziers during the late second century A.H. (8th century A.D.) and the early third. We know the names of some of the more famous of these artists, along with their particular skills. They include al-Zaqif (Ahmad b. Muhammad),⁸⁴ renowned especially for his *thulut* hand esteemed by Ibn al-Zayyad (d. 233/847), the vizier, poet, and man of letters; Ibn Ma'dan, master of the *jalil*;⁸⁵ and Abu al-Husayn Ishaq b. Ibrahim al-Barbari,

⁸⁴ Al-Baghdadi 1952-1954, 129 and al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 3: 17.

⁸⁵ For Muhammad b. Ma'dan see Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 9 (where, having mentioned Ibn Ma'dan as the master of Ishaq, the author names Banu Wajh al-Na'jah as actually being another man) and al-Baghdadi 1952-1954, 129. (He, too, considers Abu Dharjan Muhammad b. Ma'dan and Wajh al-Na'jah as two different persons); but al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 3: 16 treats Abu Dharjan and Muhammad b. Ma'dan as one person.

his most prominent student. Al-Barbari belongs to a family that boasted a number of calligraphers, one of whom was his father. Al-Barbari was tutor to the Caliph al-Muqtadir (reigned 295- 320/908-932) and to his children.⁸⁶ He was the author of the first book we know on calligraphy and writing, *Tuhfatal-Wamiq*⁸⁷ and the master of Ibn Muqlah, who started a new era in the history of calligraphy.

From its beginnings in the Arabian peninsula, the Arabic script was adopted by all nations embracing Islam, to the farthest corners of the globe. It became distinctly "Mamie" and continued to be identified with Islam for centuries to come, finding itself in new milieus, bustling with intellectual and artistic activity to rival that of the center of the Islamic caliphate. The most important such area was Egypt, where there were famous artists such as Tabtab al-Muharrir,⁸⁸ a scribe of Ibn Tülün (d. 270/884). The Baghdadis envied Ibn Tülün for having such an artist as a scribe. Yet, early in the fourth century A.H., as a result of at least three centuries of continued search and practice, the "original and balanced script" had acquired in Baghdad the features of a distinctive art, with its own rules and laws, at the hands of Ibn Muqlah —or, more accurately, the two brothers known by that name.

The Era of al-Khatt al-Mansub, the Proportioned Script

The brothers Abu Ali Muhammad b. Ali b. Muqlah (d. 328/940)⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Ibrahim b. Abd Allah al-Ahwal al-Barbari was Ishaq's father, Ishaq's brother Abu al-Hasan (who may well be Ali b. Ibrahim mentioned by Ibn al-Sa'igh 1981, 55), and his son Abu al-Qasim Ismail, and his grandson Abu Muhammad al-Qasim, and the other son of Ishaq, Abu al-Abbas Abd Allah, were all calligraphers (muharrirs). See Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 9; al-Tawhidi 1951, 29-30; al-Hamawi n.d., 6: 59-61.

⁸⁷ Al-Hamawi n.d., 6: 61; cf. Katib Çelebi 1941-1943, 1: 376 (author's name: Abu al-Husayn Ishaq b. Ibrahim al-Sa'di?).

⁸⁸ Al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 3: 17.

⁸⁹ For Abu Ali b. Muqlah see Ibn al-Nadim 1871, al-Tawhidi 1951, 30, 33, 36-37; al-Hamawi n.d., 9, 33-34 (in the biography of his brother the author says that the biography of Abu Ali b. Muqlah was mentioned in its proper place, 29, line 13 and 6: 1-2, but this section is missing). See also Ibn Khallikan 1976, 5: 113-

and Abu Abd Allah al-Hasan b. Muqlah (d. 338/949)⁹⁰ are rightly considered the founders of a new era in the history of calligraphy. When we say "Ibn Muqlah," we refer to Abu Ali, but his brother, Abu Abd Allah, was no less skillful an artist. Yaqut al-Hamawi reports an old narrative describing the way Abu All used to work.⁹¹ This tradition, reported by his servants, is of special importance, for it reflects the artist's temperament on the one hand and indicates the time-consuming nature of his work on the other. The contributions of the two brothers are generally considered together, but one can only conclude that the personality of the vizier Abu All was the weightier of the two, for he combined in himself the virtues of both and was more representative of the time.

Abu Ali Ibn Muqlah introduced a methodology with specific rules that made it possible to discover the harmony and proportions the various letters had acquired over three centuries of experimentation. Thus, the proportions of the *mawzun* script that earlier artists had intuitively discovered were laid down more clearly by Ibn Muqlah in accordance with the measurements of the art, a step that made it possible to analyze, study, and teach it. Al-Mansub (proportioned script), in which letters, separate or combined, were predictably proportional in size, replaced *ashl* and *mawzun* (balanced) calligraphy.⁹² Ibn Muqlah remained the guide and lodestar of later developments in the field. It is reported that he left thousands of sheets inscribed by him, together with two

117; Hindushah b. Sanjar 1934, 208-211; Tabataba'i 1973, 191-194; al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 3: 15, 18, *passim*; Müstakimzade 1928, 428-430; Sanglakh 1288, 19-21; al-Athari 1958, 20, 47, 50 ff; al-Abbud, 1982, 1: 61-72; Zettersteen 1967, 776-777; Sourdel 1975b, 910-911 and the sources cited in these last references.

⁹⁰ On Abu Abd Allah al-Hasan and the other figures descending from this family and mostly known as "Katib", and on Ibn Muqlah's name, see Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 9; Ibn Khallikan 1976, 5: 117-118; al-Tha'alibi 1377, 3: 118-119; and Müstakimzade 1928, 159-160.

⁹¹ Al-Hamawi n.d., 9: 32; Ibn al-Sa'igh 1981, 48.

⁹² Some scholars believe that al-khatt al-mansub (the proportioned script) was developed not by Abu All, but by his brother Abu Abd Allah al-Hasan. See, e.g., Ibn Khallikan 1976, 3: 342.

mushafs, one of which remained for some time in Seville, while the other was kept in the library of Baha' al-Dawlah al-Buwayhi (reigned 379-403/989-1013) in Shiraz. Ibn al-Bawwab, who represents the second stage in Ibn Muqlah's school, completed the *juz'* that was lost of this *mushaf* so skillfully that no one would know the difference between the two scripts.⁹³

We understand that Abu Abd Allah paid more attention to the *naskh* script, while Abu Ali's preference was for *riqa'* and *tawqi'*. Although no authentic samples by Ibn Muqlah are known to have survived, we may safely say that he had his followers and imitators. It is certain, moreover, that extant specimens dating from the fourth/ninth century, especially those written in *mustadir* (rounded) scripts, bear the stamp of his school. While the other forms of calligraphy were developing in connection with the *kufi* script in Egypt, to the west, and Iran, to the east, Iraq thus witnessed the birth of a new style.

Samples exist through which it is possible to see the sizes that were used in this new proportioned script, appropriate especially for copying books.

Scribes occupied an important position in government and administration, and calligraphy was an essential ingredient in their education. While the grand script (*jalil*) was being used on walls as a basic decorative element in architecture, scribes in high offices were using scripts developed in appropriate sizes from the *jalil*, such as *tumar*, *riyasi*, *thuluthayn*, and *tawqi'*. When the movement to write and translate books began under the Umayyads, libraries developed into research centers very much like modern institutes and academies. These research centers later developed into highly complex systems, under Harun al-Rashid and al-Ma'mun in particular, and became widely known as *Bayt al-Hikmah* (House of Wisdom) or *Khizanat al-Hikmah* (Treasury of Wisdom). Later, each cultural center witnessed the establishment of an institute known as *Dar al-ilm* (House of Knowledge) or *Dar al-Hikmah*

⁹³ Ibn Khallikan 1976, 5: 115 and al-Athari 1958, 51.

(House of Wisdom), like the one established by the Fatimids in Egypt late in the fourth century A.H. In these institutes, provided with well stocked libraries and bustling with the activity of writing translating, and copying,⁹⁴ the art of calligraphy found a perfect atmosphere for growth and development.

The services provided by the *warraqs* (booksellers)⁹⁵ were no less important in the history of calligraphy than those of the scribes themselves, for, together with the research centers, they promoted the literary and scientific movements of their day. They started as paid copyists but soon became book traders and stationers. The earliest known *warraq* was Malik b. Dinar (d. 131/748- 749), mentioned above. Libraries as well as major compilers and authors had their own *warraqs*, whose profession required that they be knowledgeable in calligraphy and grammar and have an extensive education. Scholars like Ibn al-Nadim (385/995), Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi (400/1009-1010)⁹⁶ Yaqut al-Hamawi (626/1229), and many others are said to have been *warraqs* originally. These scribes and *warraqs* developed a script specifically used for book copying in the third and fourth centuries, known as the *warraqi muhaqqaq* or Iraqi script⁹⁷ A copyist, especially one engaged in copying books on language and literature, had to be a good calligrapher and was required to pay attention to the rules of orthography touched on above. He also had to have expert knowledge of the stages of *tadwin* (recordkeeping); the writing of books, narratives, and various other works; and of the teaching methods established in the second and third centuries A.H., all of which had tangible effects on bookmaking.

Biographical dictionaries contain accounts of a number of the more prominent of such figures, who might be called "scholarly

⁹⁴ Krenkow 1977, 1126-1128; Sourdel 1975 a, 1175; Sourdel 1977, 130; Eche 1967, 1- 160.

⁹⁵ See in this regard Zayyad 1947, 302-350; Harun 1965, 17-23.

⁹⁶ Zayyad 1947, 324; al-Halwaji 1978, 41-125.

⁹⁷ Zayyad 1947, 319.

warraqs." They excelled mainly in language and literature and included between the IIIrd-IVth (IXrd-Xrd) centuries, Ibn al-Wadda' Abd Allah b. Muhammad al-Azdial-Warraq (d. 230/845)⁹⁸ Abu al-Abbas Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Ahwal al-Warraq (third century A.H.),⁹⁹ Abu Musa Sulayman al-Hamid (d. Dhu al-Hijjah 305/918),¹⁰⁰ All b. Muhammad al-Asadi, known as Ibn al-Küfi (d. 348/960),¹⁰¹ and Abu al-Hasan Alib. Abd al-Aziz al-Jurjani (d. 393/1002).¹⁰² There were scholarly *warraqs* in later times as well, including Abu Muhammad Yahya b. Muhammad al-Arzani (d. 415/1024),¹⁰³ a disciple of al-Sirafi's; Ibn Rashiq (d. 456/1064),¹⁰⁴ the famous scholar; Abu Ja'far al-Qadi al-Zawzani (d. 463/1071);¹⁰⁵ and Abu al-Hasan Hibat Allah b. al-Hasan al-Katib,¹⁰⁶ the disciple of Abu Mansur Mawhub b. Ahmad al-Jawaliqi (d. 539/1144), al-Attabi (d. 556/1161),¹⁰⁷ Yaqut al-Hamawi (d. 626/1229), who devoted a part of his book to the biographies of calligraphers, and al-Nuwayri (d. 733/1333).¹⁰⁸ A number of these scholars used to gather around the great grammarian Abu Sa'id al-Sirafi (d. 368/970) in the fourth/tenth century. al-Jawaliqi, late in the sixth century, revived this practice.

Among the notable scholarly *warraqs* who kept the chain unbroken between Ibn Muqlah and Ibn al-Bawwab were some

⁹⁸ Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 80; al-Qifti 1369-1393, 2: 134.

⁹⁹ Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 79; al-Qifti 1369-1393, 2: 134.

¹⁰⁰ Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 79; al-Qifti 1369-1393, 2: 22; Zayyad 1947, 318.

¹⁰¹ Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 79; al-Hamawi n.d., 14: 153-154.

¹⁰² Al-Tha'alibi 1377, 4: 3; al-Hamawi n.d., 14: 16, 22; Ibn Khallikan 1976, 3: 279.

¹⁰³ Al-Tha'alibi 1934, 2: 102; al-Hamawi n.d., 20: 33-35; al-Hamawi 1965, I: 206 and al-Qifti 1369-1393, 4: 34-35.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Hamawi n.d., 3: 33.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 18: 20-21; al-Qifti 1369-1393, 3: 67.

¹⁰⁶ See note 64 (F) above.

¹⁰⁷ Al-Qifti 1369-1393, 3: 188. A copy of Adah al-Katib copied in 548 A.H. is preserved in Süleymaniye Library, Laleli, MS. no. 1665.

¹⁰⁸ Ibn Taghribardi 1358, 9: 299 (year 733).

who excelled as much in calligraphy as in their scholarly pursuits; indeed, some were better known as artists than as scholars. In the course of his account of the famous linguist Isma'il b. Hammad al-Jawhari (d. 4007/1010?),¹⁰⁹ al-Tha'alibi said, "His calligraphy was proverbial in excellence and was cited among the proportioned scripts like those of Ibn Muqlah, Muhalhil, and al-Yazidi. Al-Jawhari had learned the art in Iraq while pursuing his linguistic studies before he went to teach it in Nishapur. He was thus the first to spread Ibn Muqlah's style eastwards.

To this period belongs a book¹¹⁰ copied by Muhalhil b. Ahmad in 347/958; like al-Jawhari, he was a follower of al-Sirafi's school. The book appears to be one of the most beautiful and characteristic samples from this period (see Plate 8). Another book copied by Abu Abd Allah Muhammad b. Asad al-Katib al-Bazzaz al-Baghdadi (d. 410/1019),^{111,112} a leading master of this style, was finished in 370/980 and became an important milestone in the history of calligraphy (see Plate 12). Ibn Asad, who was the master of Ibn al-Bawwab, the uncontested master of the art whose style

¹⁰⁹ Al-Tha'alibi 1377, 4: 406-407, and, quoting this, al-Hamawi n.d., 4: 152-153 and al-Qifti 1369-1393, 1: 194-195.

¹¹⁰ On this copy see note 64 (B) above. Regarding al-Jawhari, al-Tha'alibi says: "His style in calligraphy is, like that of Ibn Muqlah, Muhalhil, and al-Yazidi, considered one of al-khutut al-mansubah] (proportioned scripts)" (see references given in note 109 above). It may be observed that books copied by this scholar-calligrapher, whose name was coupled with Ibn Muqlah's, were highly valued. Abd al-Qadir al-Baghdadi took care to mention that one of the two commentaries on the Diwan of Zuhayr was lodged in his own library and that it was copied by this man, adding that "he is Muhalhil, the well-known calligrapher, one of the masters of the well-proportioned script" (Khizanat al-Adab, 1299, 1: 376 and 1347 2: 291). We may also mention here another important sentence occurring at the end of a copy of al-Muqtadab, which we possess, about Muhalhil's calligraphy: "People were highly attracted to books containing a record indicating that Abu Sa'id al-Sirafi had read the book and corrected it." (See al-Hamawi n.d., 8: 190 and Zayyad 1947, 316-317). Such records related to al-Sirafi appear on the first page of each volume of the above-mentioned copy.

¹¹¹ On Ibn Asad see al-Khatib 1952-1954, 2: 83; Ibn Khallikan 1976, 3: 342-343; at-Safadi 1981 2: 201, n. 576; Ismail Pasha 1951-1955, 2: 61.

¹¹² See note 64 (C) above.

prevailed for three centuries beginning from the early part of the fifth century, admired Abu Abd Allah b. Muqlah's method. As mentioned earlier, Ibn Muqlah had developed a special script for copying books. Ibn Asad copied the book mentioned above, which was in Ibn Muqlah's hand. An ancient anonymous treatise¹¹³ on the proportioned script reports that Ibn Asad used to copy volumes of poetry or poetic anthologies in the *naskh* script, which was close to the *muhajjaq*, a description that not only characterizes Ibn Asad's style but also the style that was prevalent at the time. This script is generally known as *naskhi*, which has a number of the characteristics of *muhajjaq*, by then recognized as an independent form among the "six pens," with its own shapes and rules. This is the same script that was later developed into *rayhani* and *naskh*.

Another artist usually mentioned in the genealogical tree connecting Ibn Muqlah and Ibn al-Bawwab is Muhammad b. al-Simsimani,¹¹⁴ but information about him was mixed up with information about others rather early on.¹¹⁵ The scanty and

¹¹³ Risalah fi al-Kitabah al-Mansubah, ed. Khalil Mahmud Asakir, Majallat Ma'had al-Makhtutat at-Arabiyyah (1375/1955), 1: 126, lines 10-11, and, quoting this, al-Athari 1958, 48.

¹¹⁴ al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 3: 17; Ibn al-Sa'igh 1981, 50; Müstakimzade 1928 (in Turkish), 330-331, line 19.

¹¹⁵ Those artists whose biographies have been confused are:

a) Muhammad b. al-Simsimani, who may well be Abu al-Husayn Muhammad b. Ali al-Simsimani, mentioned in Bugyat al-Wu'at, 83, notwithstanding the reservations of al-Athari 1958, 19-20, 47. The date of his death is given as Wednesday, 5 Muharram 415 A.H.

a) Some details of the biography of this man have been mixed up with those of the biography of Abu al-Hasan Ali b. 'Ubayd Allah b. Ghaffar al-Simsimani at a comparatively early date. The date of his death is given as occurring on the same day in the same month and year. Reasons other than the identity of the last name [al-Simsimani] also contributed to the confusion. Both, for example, studied under the same masters. Habib even says that they were "colleagues" in learning calligraphy (p. 43). Although there was some common ground between the two, Muhammad b. al-Simsimani was more prominent as a calligrapher while the other was more prominent in language and literature. On Abu al-Hasan Ali b. 'Ubayd Allah al-Simsimani see al-Khatib 1931, 12: 10; al-Anbari 1968, 230, 232; al-Hamawi

confused information about this artist —who, together with Ibn Asad, was referred to by al-Āthari as the Muhammadayn (two Muhammads)¹¹⁶— gives us reason to believe that he was indirectly connected with Ibn Muqlah, that he belonged to the group that gathered in al-Sirafi's circle, which we had referred to earlier, and that he was a member of a distinguished small group of artists in the second half of the fourth/tenth century.¹¹⁷

We may note here that the style generally known as *kufi*, after its development in Kufah, kept its distinctive features and traditional use as the script of the *mushafs* for a while, but was gradually limited in use to a decorative element in book titles, architecture and on objects and utensils. In contrast, the *mawzin* (balanced) scripts, which were derived from the rounded script, became indispensable in the art of calligraphy and began to gain certain features, in addition to thickness of line and size of letters, which were closely connected to the proportions determined by Ibn Muqlah. This development entailed revision and selection; consequently, certain scripts of different sizes emerged to fit certain specialized uses.

It is difficult to know for certain which scripts were discarded in the process. The scripts on some extant works do not conform to known styles, yet they have obvious distinctive features. The script

n.d., 14: 58-61; al-Qifti 1369-1393, 2: 288 and 4: 150-151; Ibn Khallikan 1976, 3: 312; ZZughyaf aZ-Wu'af, 341.

c) It is quite probable that All b. Muhammad al-Simsimani al-Baghdadi, whose name has been mentioned in al-Qifti 1369-1393, 2: 305 and is said to have died on Wednesday 5 Muharram 415 A.H. is only a misreading for Muhammad b. Ali. Interestingly enough, the places mentioned by the publisher in his note regarding his biography do not actually concern him but Ali b. 'Ubayd Allah.

¹¹⁶ Al-Athari 1979, fol. 71b.

¹¹⁷ We gather from what Habib says (p. 43) that Muhammad b. Ali and Ali b. 'Ubayd Allah belong to the same generation. It is also said that al-Sirafi (368/970) and Abu al-Fath al-Maraghi (376/986) taught both of them. Their own students belong to the generation of persons that died in the first half of the fifth/eleventh century.

of a copy of an al-Sirafi book¹¹⁸ made in 376/986 by All b. Shadhan al-Razi, for instance, is a characteristic example of a style that was highly sought after in the eastern part of the Islamic World up to the late sixth/twelfth century (see Plate 10). On the other hand, some of the names of the scripts that have survived have probably been corrupted, and some terms remain ambiguous. Ibn al-Nadim, for example, mentions the compound word *khan hark* (خط برك) in the course of his account of Ibn Qutayba's works in his *Fihrist*.¹¹⁹ Some take the word *hark* (برك) to be the name of a district in Yemen, while others read it as Turk (ترك).¹²⁰

The word appears in various undotted shapes in manuscripts of the book; it has even been taken to mean *nazik*, Persian for soft.¹²¹ The correct meaning, however, is *nazil* (نزل) for as al-Suli (d. 336/947), quoting al-Tannukhi, says, "When a book is cluttered with writing, it is called *nazil*".¹²² This meaning of the word was included in important dictionaries. The number of script names mentioned by Ibn al-Nadim and read variously by modern scholars is considerable, but at least some of them can be reasonably ascertained with a careful review of scholarly editions of the different sources.

Ibn Muqlah's calligraphy remained the model for a century.

¹¹⁸ Istanbul, no. 1842 [al-Sirafi]. On this copy see note 64 (D) above. The same calligraphic features may be observed in the following books copied between the fourth and early sixth centuries A.H.:

a) Istanbul, no 3483 [r/qa'].

b) Istanbul, no 3386 [al-Bīruni].

c) Al-Harawi 1055, this copy is known as the earliest Persian MS. See on it, e.g., Ateş 1949, 1: 65; Yar-Shatir 1332, vol. 5, no. 4. al-Raduyani, pt. I, 63-64. There is also a copy of the ZZo/y Qur'an by All b. Shadhan al-Razi (See Plate 9).

¹¹⁹ Ibn al-Nadim 1871, 77. line 25, and, quoting this, Ibn Qutaybah, 21.

¹²⁰ Ibn al-Nadim 1970, 1: 171, note 5.

¹²¹ Ibn al-Nadim 1971, 85, line 19, note 7; 1343, 131, line 14.

¹²² Al-Suli 1341, 61, Ibn Mandhur under n-z-1: "khattun nazilun ayy mujtami'."

Ibn al-Bawwab (d. 413/1022)¹²³ whose art, together with that of his masters, descends from Ibn Muqlah —examined and imitated Ibn Muqlah's calligraphy for years until he equaled the master in his art.¹²⁴ Thereafter, he developed his own method and style. He selected characteristics common to the various scripts, made the geometric proportions of *al-khatt al-mansub* more exact, and directed the art of calligraphy, which had branched in different directions, toward the styles he had chosen. Ibn al-Bawwab composed a poem (*qasvdah*) on calligraphy and the pen,¹²⁵ and is said to have copied 64 *mushafs* and to have written small treatises and poetic anthologies, among other works (see Plates 13 and 14). Some of these works have been preserved, replacing the work of Ibn Muqlah and serving as wonderful models for calligraphers for three centuries.¹²⁶ (See Plates 50 and 51).

Ibn al-Bawwab's imitators were judged by how closely they adhered to his style and the characteristics of his school. One such imitator was Abu al-Fadl Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Dinawari (d. 518/1124), known as Ibn al-Khazin,¹²⁷ who tended to restrict himself to the *riqa'* and *tawqi'* scripts. Another was the traditionist Zaynab bint Ahmad b. Abu al-Faraj al-Ibāri al-Baghdadi (d. 574/1178), known as Shuhdah, one of the few remarkable women who excelled in this field, and who was taught by her father and then by Muhammad b. Abd al-Malik.¹²⁸ One of

¹²³ On Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Hilal al-Bawwab, sometimes known as Ibn al-Satri, see al-Hamawi n.d., 15: 120-134; Ibn Khallikan 1976, 3: 342-344, 5: 117, 6: 119, 7: 322; al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 3: 17; Ibn Khaldun 1960, 3: 958-960; Ibn al-Sa'igh 1981, 50-53; Qadi Ahmad 1959, 56-57; Müstakimzade 1928, 331; Habib 1305, 44; Huart 1967, 847; Sourdel-Thomine 1975, 536-537; Ünver 1958 b; al-Athari 1958.

¹²⁴ Al-Hamawi n.d., 15: 122-123; Sanjar 1934, 208, lines 20-22, and see note 93.

¹²⁵ See this poem in Ibn Khaldun 1960, Habib 1305, and places mentioned above. The poem has recently been published by Hilal Naji with the commentaries of Ibn al-Wahid (d. 711/1311) and Ibn al-Basis (d. 10th century A.H.), 1986, s.v. "Sharb al-Manzumat] al-Mustatabah fi ilm al-Kitabah, " al-Mawrid. 15/4: 259-270.

¹²⁶ See Ünver 1958 b, 22-33 and al-Athari 1958, 85-89.

¹²⁷ On him see Ibn Khallikan 1976, 1: 149-151, 7: 310; Sanglakh 1288, 22.

¹²⁸ On him see Ibn Khallikan 1976, 2: 477-478; al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 3: 18;

the most distinguished calligraphers to bear the name of Yaqut, other than al-Musta'simī,¹²⁹ was Amin al-Din Yaqut al-Mawsili al-Maliki (618/1221),¹³⁰ who assumed the sobriquet al-Maliki in honor of Sultan Malikshah. Another fine calligrapher was Wall al-Din b. Zinki al-Ajami,¹³¹ Amin al-Din's student. The names of both these calligraphers occur in the genealogical tree of those who spread the mansub script as it was practiced in Egypt and Anatolia. Another name worthy of mention in this regard is that of the famous musician Safi al-Din Abd al-Mu'min al-Urmawi (693/1294), who was a courtier for the caliph al-Musta'sim and then became head librarian in the newly established library of the caliph. Yaqut al-Musta'simī learned calligraphy from this artist.¹³²

Baghdad remained the center for calligraphic development for about five centuries. During this period of revision and selection, the greatest artist was Abu al-Majd Jamal al-Din Yaqut b. Abd Allah al-Musta'simī (698/1298), who also grew up in Baghdad.¹³³ In the history of calligraphy, this artist was like the meeting place of various rivers, where they become clear and limpid, then branch again in different directions. Although he is sometimes linked to Shuhdah bint al-lbarī¹³⁴ on the calligraphic genealogical tree, the Yaqut who should occupy that position is Amin al-Din al-Maliki,¹³⁵ for it is necessary, in a chain like this, for one or

Ibn al-Sa'igh 1981, 53-54; Müstakimzade 1928, 227-228; Habib, 48; Dhihni 1294, 1: 343.

¹²⁹ On the calligraphers known as Yaqut b. Abd Allah and the sources dealing with them, see Çetin 1986, 352-357.

¹³⁰ On him see al-Hamawi n.d., 19: 312-313; Ibn Khallikan 1976, 6: 119-122; Müstakimzade 1928, 576-577; İsmail Pasha 1951-1955, 2: 513.

¹³¹ al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 3: 14; Müstakimzade 1928, 573.

¹³² Müstakimzade 1928, 575; Habib 1305, 51.

¹³³ For brief information about Yaqut al-Musta'simī and the sources dealing with him, see Çetin 1986, 352-357.

¹³⁴ See, e.g., al-Athari 1979, fol. 71b.

¹³⁵ al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 3: 18. The statement in Çetin 1986, 354, col. 1, lines 23-31 should be corrected as here.

more links to intervene between al-Musta'simi and Shuhdah. It appears that al-Musta'simi studied under Safi al-Din al-Urmawi and others, but his real debt goes to Ibn Muqlah and, especially, to Ibn al-Bawwab, whose calligraphic works he studied carefully and long.

Although al-Musta'simi generally adhered to the rules put forth by Ibn Muqlah and developed by Ibn al-Bawwab, he nevertheless added gracefulness to the style of the latter and came up with a style of his own. The change he introduced to the shape of the pen—increasing the angle of the cut and thickening the tip—had a marked effect on the six basic scripts (*muhaqqaq*, *rayhani*, *thuluth*, *tawqi'*, *rika'*, and *naskhi*). He particularly excelled in improving *muhaqqaq* and *rayhani*. *Thuluth* and *naskh*, however, had to wait until the appearance of the Ottoman school to reach the same degree of perfection.

Most of Yaqut's surviving works are *mushafs*, and the large number of complete *mushafs* (see Plates 23, 25, and 26) or *An'ams* (Qur'anic selections of one or more surahs) found in various libraries and museums supports the widespread conviction that no other calligrapher copied more *mushafs*.¹³⁶ After the *Holy Qur'an*, Yaqut most preferred to copy small collections of Traditions and short verse volumes and anthologies, in addition to his own treatises in verse and prose.¹³⁷ (See Plates 24 and 27.) Some of the extant works bearing his signature are not authentic but are copies; locating and identifying these copies requires serious study. The confusion arises from Yaqut's arrangements with his students. To advance in their art and develop a personal style, calligraphy students first had to comprehend the most minute details of their master's style through a period of emulation that might last for years—a method we might describe as the extraction of copies (*çıkartma*) of the master's calligraphic models. Thus the most

¹³⁶ See, e.g., Karatay 1962-1969, 1: 29-36, no. 89-110. There are twenty-two works varying in dates between 640 and 696 A.H. See also TIEM, no. 28, 328, 505, 507, 525.

¹³⁷ On the nature of these books and some of their MSS, see Çetin 1986, 354-355.

talented students would follow the great master of the age, who represented the highest stage in his teaching line, although they occasionally differed in their understanding of his method. Yaqut, for example, became the center of a "Yaquti school" during his lifetime. Consequently, the names of such masters as Yaqut and Seyh Hamdullah cannot be mentioned in isolation, for Yaqut's art, with his signature, was copied by his students and his students' students.

Yaqut did not leave Baghdad after the fall of the Abbasids (656/1258); in fact, during this period, he was in his most productive phase and particularly excelled as a teacher. As his reputation grew throughout the Islamic world, talented students came from various places to study under him. Some of these students so distinguished themselves in his eyes that he permitted six of them to use his signature on their reproductions of his work.¹³⁸ Thus, although many works bear Yaqut's signature along with that of one of his students, many others bear his name alone. In addition, some followers of Yaqut who did not study directly under him nevertheless copied his works, sometimes changing the original date to the date when it was copied. Consequently, we cannot assume that every work bearing Yaqut's name is his.

Yaqut and his chosen six students were known as "the seven masters." (See Plates 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 36, and 37.) The six students transmitted the characteristics of Yaqut's school of calligraphy to various areas. Their names differ from one account to another, but the following names commonly occur: Ergun b. Abd Allah al-Kamili (d. 744/1343-1344; Plate 37); al-Shaykh Ahmad b. al-Suhrawardi (Plates 28, 29, and 30); Mubarakshah al-Suyufi; Mubarakshah b. Qutb (Plate 31); Abd Allah b. Mahmud al-Sayrafi (Plate 32); and Nasr Allah al-Tabib. The names Yusuf b. Yahyaal-Mashhadi (or al-Khurasani, al-Harawi, or al-Kufi) and Sayyid Haydar Gundah Nuwis also occur.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Qadi Ahmad 1959, 60.

¹³⁹ On these persons, the sources dealing with them, and the copies preserved of their writings, see Çetin 1986, 355-356.

Although some of Yaqut's gifted contemporaries, such as Wall al-Din al-Ajami, followed Ibn al-Bawwab, it is certain that Yaqut was influential in developing and popularizing the mansub (proportioned) script, either directly or through his students.

Calligraphy After Yaqut

With its ties to the sciences and the fine arts, calligraphy became the most prominent arena for artistic competition in the Islamic world of the eighth/fourteenth century. After this time, Baghdad (or rather, Iraq) lost its preeminent position in the development of calligraphy. When we consider the level this art attained in various regions, we can understand Ibn Khaldun's theory that¹⁴⁰ the rise and fall of calligraphy—as of all the arts and sciences—are linked directly to social and political conditions and to civilization and wealth. After calligraphy's initial development in the Hijaz, Kufah, Basrah, Damascus, and Baghdad, artists in the Eastern regions of the Islamic world began devoting themselves to calligraphy under the Ghaznavids and the Great Seljuks. In the seventh and eighth/thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, during the days of the Ilkhanids, Timurids, and Jalayirids, calligraphy was highly appreciated and encouraged by the rulers, viziers, and princes. The Vizier Baysunghur b. Shah-Rukh (d. 837/1433),¹⁴¹ a patron of the arts and sciences, was a notable calligrapher himself. In his library, which was a veritable arts center, he employed some forty artists who specialized in calligraphy, ornamentation, engraving, gilding, and bookbinding. Calligraphic designs on the Jawhar Shad Khatun Mosque in Mashhad bearing his signature are a fascinating monument to the artistic level attained in the Yaqut-style *jali thuluth* script in the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century. Moreover, in the days of Sultan Abu al-Ghazi Mirza Husayn b. Mansür b. Bayqara (873-911/1469-1506), the ruler-poet

¹⁴⁰ Ibn Khaldun 1960, 3: 949.

¹⁴¹ On Baysunghur, see Togan 1970, 428-430.

of Khurasan, Herat witnessed an artistic and literary activity that almost overshadowed the sultan's military and political successes. Herat was the liveliest of the scientific and artistic centers during Abu al-Ghazi Mirza's reign; there, the arts of the book developed rapidly, not only in content, but in calligraphy, gilding, decoration, and binding. Much of this activity was carried out under the patronage of the sultan himself or that of his vizier, the distinguished poet Prince Amir All Shir Nawa'i (d. 906/1501).¹⁴²

In Egypt, meanwhile, calligraphy attained a high level of excellence under the Tulunids (254-292/868-905) and maintained it under the Fatimids (358-567/910-1171), the Ayyubids (569-650/1174-1252), and especially the Mamluks (648-932/1220-1517). Various extant documents date from these periods, as do *mushafs* and architectural calligraphic designs. A study of the historical data and archaeological remains indicates that Cairo became the second most important center of calligraphy after Baghdad until the eighth/fourteenth century. In Cairo, where Ibn al-Bawwab's style developed alongside the school of Baghdad, calligraphers later adopted Yaqut's refinements. They continued to follow the calligraphic traditions of the eighth/fourteenth century, more faithfully than calligraphers elsewhere, until the emergence of the Ottoman school (see Plates 50 and 51). Many Mamluk works have been preserved, along with some books on the theory, practice, and teaching of calligraphy. Ibn Khaldun, the great thinker who died early in the ninth/fifteenth century, points to the high level attained by the art and explains the reasons for this achievement. He also discusses the method of teaching calligraphy¹⁴³ —not, as some have thought, the teaching of ordinary writing.¹⁴⁴ In Andalusia and North Africa (al-Maghrib), students were given

¹⁴² On Ibn Bayqara and All Shir Nawa'i and the scientific and artistic environment in which they lived, see Togan 1965, 349-357 and Togan 1964, 434-440 as well as Subtelny 1993, 90-93; Frye 1979, 177-178 and Beveridge 1964, 645-646.

¹⁴³ Ibn Khaldun 1960, 3; 949-950.

¹⁴⁴ Note 1275 in Ibn Khaldun 1960, and, quoting him, note 7 of Ibn Khaldun 1983.

a sentence to copy several times. In the words of Ibn Khaldun, "A learner learns the art by imitating the written sentence as a whole, and this continues under the supervision of the tutor until the learner masters the art." In Egypt, however, lessons in calligraphy began by teaching the shapes of the letters in isolation, according to rules for every letter laid down by the tutor. Specialized calligraphy teachers were found in Egypt. The pedagogical principles mentioned by Ibn Khaldun may be gleaned from two books: *al-Inayah al-Rabbaniyyahfi al-Tariqah ah-Sha'baniyyah*,¹⁴⁵ by Zayn al-Din Sha'ban b. Muhammad al-Athari, written in 800/1398, and *Subhal- A'sha*, the famous encyclopedia by al-Qalqashandi (d. 821/1418), in which the author devoted a detailed section to calligraphy.¹⁴⁶

In regions further removed from the Hijaz, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, different styles developed under various circumstances. The most remarkable of these is the North African, which spread in North and West Africa, in the middle of that continent, and in Andalusia. This script retained vestiges from the period of early Islamic conquests and the period of transition in such matters as the order of the letters of the alphabet, the shapes and dots of some letters, and even the shapes of some vowel markers (*harakat*). Some of these vestiges still exist in the script today. It appears that this style first developed in Qayrawan (in present-day Tunisia), which was established in the year 50/670 and soon became a notable center for science, philosophy, and art, especially under the Aghlabids (184-296/800-909). B. Moritz¹⁴⁷ is certainly right in thinking that this North African style is not a natural development of the Eastern style of writing: rather, it seems to be a consciously developed style invented by some scholar who took the *kufi* script used in *mushafs* as his basis. In addition to the type known as the *Qayrawani* script (Plate 16), other subsidiary styles

¹⁴⁵ On the correct copy of this book used in this introduction, see the Bibliography.

¹⁴⁶ al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 3: 1-143.

¹⁴⁷ Moritz 1965, 508b.

also appeared, the most important of which were the *Mahdiyyah* and the Andalusian or Cordovan. The Andalusian replaced the *Qayrawani* and the *Mahdiyyah* scripts all over North Africa until the latter days of the Muwahhids (524-668/1 130-1269). Later there appeared a Fezian script, then, as of the seventh/fourteenth century, a Sudanese script. North Africa today has four different types of script: Tunisian, Algerian, Moroccan, and Sudanese.

During the several centuries before the second half of the ninth/fifteenth century, calligraphy continued to develop in two distinct lines. The first was restricted to the traditional and conservative milieu of the government offices where it stagnated. The second went through a natural evolution and gained brilliance in time. The latest stage in this evolution was achieved by the early calligraphers of the Ottoman school, who raised the art of Islamic calligraphy to the highest levels, basing the art on a system that took into account all the developments of the previous nine centuries. During this period, a number of traditions, measurements, and terms were developed, discarded, or replaced. Therefore, before discussing Ottoman calligraphy itself, it may be helpful to review briefly some of the developments that paved the way for this golden age of Islamic calligraphy.

One term that was replaced in the pre-Ottoman period was *muharrir*. Master calligraphers had been called *muharrirs* since the second/eighth century, and the word *tahrir* was used to denote artistic inscription.¹⁴⁸ It is probable that *muharrir* was replaced by *khattat* as early as the sixth/twelfth century.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ See note 71.

¹⁴⁹ In the MS copy of Ibn Qutaybah's *Adab al-Kuttāb* (Istanbul, No. 1165), we see a collection record in which a scholar named Izz al-Din b. Nasr al-Khattat is mentioned. The same record informs us that this scholar read this book under All Abu Mansur al-Jawaliqi (539/1144). 'Umar b. al-Husayn (552/1157) is also known as al-Khattat (calligrapher), and in the 6th/12th century he was a famous artist of the school of Ibn al-Bawwab. See al-Hamawi n.d., 16: 59-60. On the strength of a comparatively old tradition we may infer that earlier the term "khattat" was not understood to mean "artist"; rather it denoted "a person who taught reading and writing". The poet Dhu al-Rumma (d. 117/735), one of the poets of the Umayyad

The Egyptians, as mentioned earlier, were the most faithful to the conventions of the past. Al-Qalqashandi, who gave a detailed account of the state of calligraphy in Egypt, continued to uphold the old conventions still followed in the *diwan al-insha'* (or bureau of records and correspondence), in spite of the fact that in his book, he made use of al-Athari, the best authority on the kinds of scripts. The term *qalam*, for example, he sometimes used to mean the thickness of the letters (*misahatarad al-qalam*, or the width of the pen's tip) and sometimes to denote the style or type of calligraphy (the *tariqah*, to use his own term). Therefore, when we read his *Subh al-A'sha*, we must not confuse specific pens for writing scripts of various sizes with the types of script. Al-Qalqashandi devoted separate chapters to the following six *qalams* in the course of attempting to acquaint his readers with those used in his day in the *diwan al-insha'*: *al-tumar al-kamil*; *mukhtasar al-tumar al-thuluth* (*al-thuluth al-thaqil* and *al-thuluth al-khafif* are treated in the same chapter); *al-tawqi'at*; *al-riqa'* and *al-ghubar*.¹⁵⁰ In addition to using these terms to mean the various widths of the pens and the various styles of scripts that evolved through the use of these pens, he also uses such terms as the *tumar* method (*tariqah*), the *thuluth* method, and the *muhaqqaq* method, especially when he intends to denote styles of calligraphy.¹⁵¹ Briefly, the *qalam* meant the type of script as well as the instrument used to produce it.

Mention should also be made of the kinds of pens and scripts popular at the time in Egypt, as gathered from the two books *Subhal-A'shaandal-'Inayah al-Rabbaniyah*. They are: *al-tumar* and

period, used to go to the Badiyah (desert) to learn to write under the teacher who used to teach children of his own tribe how to read and write (al-Marzubani, 1965, 280). The poet inscribed in his mind the letters his teacher used to draw for him "on the sand in moonlit nights"; he did not write letters, but was able to read them. In two of the three reports that have come down to us through different routes, the poet mentions that this man was "Hayriyyan" (from Hirah) (line 8) and "hadariyyan" (of urban origin) (line 19). In the third report he said he was "khattat" (line 14).

¹⁵⁰ Al-Qalqashandi 1913-1918, 1-2: 53-133.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 54. 135-138.

mukhtasar al-tumar; al-thuluth and khafif al-thuluth; al-tawqi; al-riqa'; al-muhaqqaq and al-rayhan; al-ghubar; al-manthur, and al-hawashi. Some of these types were only variations in size and thickness on the same style, while others were close to each other in style. *Ghubar*, for instance, is miniscule *naskh*, which itself is the *waddah* form of *al-tawqi*. *Hawashi*, too, is miniature *naskh* written in diagonal lines. *Manthuris* miniaturized disconnected *riqa'* or *naskh*, while *rayhanis* a subdivision of *muhaqqaq*, only half as thick. *Musalsal*, which is not an independent type, developed as a branch of *tawqi*.

The oldest of these types are *tawqi'* and *riqa'*. As extant illustrations of the first forms of these two scripts show, care was taken in official documents, books, and treatises that comments denoting authorship and date of composition, as well as the *mutala'ah* (reading), *muqabalah* (comparison), *sama'* (hearing), and date of completion, be in a different, generally more pliable script so as not to be confused with the main text. The *tawqi'* and *riqa'* scripts (later known as the *ijazah* script) developed from the script used in these records.

Muhaqqaq and *rayhan* (or later, *rayhani*), the oldest scripts to acquire a special character, emerged from the script developed by the *warraqs* and scholarly copyists for use in books. At first, they generally called this script *al-naskhi*; then it became known as the *Iraqi al-warraqi* (booksellers' script), or *al-muhaqqaq*. By the time of the fifth/eleventh century, *Yaqut al-Musta'simi* and his contemporaries used these scripts primarily, preferring them to *kufi* in *mushaf* copying. By contrast, *thuluth* and *naskh* did not reach the same degree of perfection until the emergence of the Ottoman school. In time, however, *thuluth* and, to a lesser extent, *naskh* replaced *muhaqqaq* and *rayhani* in most uses. *Naskh* gradually acquired distinctive characteristics and took its place among the six main scripts, becoming the most popular for book copying, while *thuluth* became the basic script in Islamic calligraphy.

One formerly popular term that was abandoned after the emergence of the Ottoman school was *al-jalil* (the grand). At first glance, the term appears to have given way to the term *jali*, but

the idea of large lettering denoted by the two terms is different. In the early years, *al-jalil* denoted pens used for large letters in two scripts, one pliable and curved, the other flat and angular; it also denoted pens used in standard-size large scripts, such as *tumar* and short *tumar* (*mukhtasar al-tumar*). The term *al-jalil* kept this meaning even when other styles of calligraphy began to appear. The term *jali*, on the other hand, was used to indicate any script (except *diwani*) in a larger-than-ordinary size; it later denoted large lettering. Thus the minimum dimension of the pen's tip in the *jali* version of a script varied according to the script.

Up until the ninth/fifteenth century, the most important scripts, and those that met with the greatest favor, were *ta'liq*, *nasta'liq* (*naskh* plus *ta'liq*; in Turkish, *nasta'liq*), *siyaqat* and *diwani*. *ta'liq* probably appeared in Iran in the sixth/twelfth century and acquired its well-known characteristics in the seventh/thirteenth century. We will call this type *old ta'liq*, as opposed to the *ta'liq* employed by the Ottomans later on. Some are inclined to see the influence of the Pahlavi script in the emergence of the *old ta'liq*, but it is more likely that this type, which was used mainly in official documents, developed out of *tawqi* and *riqa'*. *Old ta'liq*, at any rate, did not find favour among the Ottomans, for *diwani* (which had basically developed out of *ta'liq* and *riqa'* in addition to adopting some of the characteristics of the *old ta'liq*) was adopted for official correspondence as a highly artistic script with two varieties, each used for special purposes.

With a few exceptions, these scripts were not used in book copying. Another kind of script was developed in Iran for this purpose, known as *nasta'liq*, a less demanding script that soon became popular (though less so than *naskh*). *Nasta'liq*—known later among the Ottomans simply as *ta'liq*—was the natural outcome of a long period of development. More pliable and more suited to speed, it originated in the *tawqi* and *riqa'* scripts and developed through use in traditional recitation sessions and in book drafts, gradually acquiring its own characteristics. An old phrase describing the draft manuscripts of the famous *Kitab al-*

Aghani Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani (356/967)¹⁵² indicates that this type of writing was called *khattat al-ta'liq* (*ta'liq* script), but the documents that clearly exhibit characteristics of its classical form date from only the seventh/thirteenth century; these characteristics were finalized in Iran early in the ninth/fifteenth century. As is the case with other kinds of script,¹⁵³ historians sometimes speak of an artist, Mir All Tabrizi,¹⁵⁴ who, they say, "invented" *nasta'liq*. They even give the year 823/1420 as the date of this invention. In fact, this story indicates that the script was used by Mir All, that it became one of the recognized styles, and that it was based on principles and rules.

Finally, as for the *siyaqat* script, it is more commonly found in the margins of official government documents than as an independent artistic form of calligraphy. An old script, it is likely that it varied in shape and essence from period to period and from place to place. It is one of the remains of former times, still known by the same name, a relic of the administrative structure of the Ottoman state.

Thus, we can say that calligraphy, one of the most original and energetic of the arts of Islam, flourished for five centuries in Baghdad. When Baghdad lost its preeminent position as the capital of calligraphy, the art spread for a time through various milieus. From the conquest of Constantinople until our own time—an epoch of development in grace and splendor—calligraphy has found its home in İstanbul.

¹⁵² Al-Hamawi n.d., 13: 126-127.

¹⁵³ It is reported, for example, that the old *ta'liq* was invented by Abu al-Al or al-Hasan b. Husayn b. All al-Farisi al-Katib: (Sanglakh 1288, 22, and Alparslan 1978, 1155-156).

¹⁵⁴ On the popular tradition in this regard, see Qadi Ahmad 1959, 25, 100, 116; All 1926, 32; Müstakimzade 1928, 688-690; Habib 1305, 207.