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BAGHDAD: CALLIGRAPHY CAPITAL UNDER THE MONGOLS

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The capture of Baghdad by the Mongol warlord Hulagu on 4 Safar 656/10 February 1258 has often been considered a watershed, used to divide the early Islamic period from the later. Already in the early fourteenth century the event was seen as an important moment in world history, depicted as a large double-page illustration in Rashid al-Din's compendium of chronicles entitled *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*,¹ and this situation remains true today when many surveys of Islamic history and art are divided along that fault line.² Contemporary authors writing in both Persian and Arab lamented the occasion as calamitous, yet despite their repeated descriptions of siege, fire, and looting, the city was

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¹ The double-page illustration has been detached from the first volume of Rashid al-Din's world history and mounted as separate pages in an album in Berlin (Staatsbibliothek, Diez A, fol. 70, s. 7 and 4). The double-page is reproduced in Sheila Blair, *A Compendium of Chronicles: Rashid al-Din's History of the World*, London, 1995, figs. 62-63.

² This is the case, for example, in the standard surveys of Islamic art in the Pelican history of art series: Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar and Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, *Islamic Art and Architecture 650-1250*, 2nd ed., New Haven, 2001, and Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250-1800*, London, 1994. The division into two parts in textbooks may also be conditioned by the semester arrangement in college teaching. Marshall Hodgson's seminal three-volume history, *The Venture of Islam*, Chicago, 1974, which probably has more intellectual validity but is awkward to squeeze into a two-semester arrangement, also reflects the trimester arrangement at the institution where he taught, the University of Chicago.

spared complete devastation and its cultural life soon resumed.³ This was the case with calligraphy and the associated arts of the book,⁴ and these works of art, both written and illustrated, help us to trace the role of Baghdad as a cultural capital during the period of Mongol sovereignty in the late seventh/thirteenth and eighth/fourteenth centuries.

Literary culture flourished in Baghdad soon after the Mongol conquest under the patronage of the Juvayni brothers, Shams al-din Muhammad and 'Ala' al-Din 'Ata Malik.⁵ Shams al-Din served as chief minister (*sāhib dīwān*) for the Mongols from 661/1262-63 until shortly before his execution on 4 Sha'ban 683/16 October 1284. Amassing a large fortune, particularly in landed property, he used a large portion of his income to support scientists such as Nasir al-din Tusi, poets such as Sa'di, and theologians, all of whom dedicated their works to him. Shams al-Din himself composed poetry in both Arabic and Persian as well as official documents (*munsha'āt*).

Shams al-Din's rank and erudition are epitomized by his pen box, now in the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha.⁶ Made of brass inlaid with silver and gold, the small (20-cm.) square box with rounded ends is decorated both outside and inside with a stunning design of scrolls inhabited with birds. Cartouches on the inside contain a dedication to the minister, and both the form of the inscribed text and the decoration around it suggest an attribution to local manufacture in Iraq or Syria.⁷ Signs of wear suggest that the pen box was not only decorative but also functional.

³ See, for example, the lament by Ibn Abi'l-Yusr and references to others given in M. S. Simpson, "The Role of Baghdad in the formation of Persian Painting", *Art et société dans le monde iranien*, ed. C. Adle, Paris, 1982, pp. 91-116. The traditional view of the city's history is summarized by A. A. Duri in "Baghdād", *EI*^{2nd}, I, p. 894, but recently historians such as George Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance*, London, 2003, have questioned whether Hulegu's campaign was as destructive as that by Genghis earlier in the century and suggested instead that a sense of continuity prevailed.

⁴ For painting, see Simpson, "Role of Baghdad".

⁵ Biographies by B. Spuler, "Djuwaynī, Shams al-Dīn Mu-ammad b. Mu-ammad", *EI*^{2nd}, II, p. 607, and W. Barthold [J. A. Boyle], "Djuwaynī, 'Alā' al-Dīn 'A-ā'-Malik b. Mu-ammad", *EI*^{2nd}, II, p. 606; Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, Chapter 6, pp. 177-212.

⁶ Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, MW 221; Sabiha al Khemir, *De Cordoue à Samarcande: Chefs-d'Oeuvre du Musée d'Art islamique de Doha*, Paris, 2006, pp. 136-39.

⁷ The inscription, for example, uses the typical Mamluk form beginning 'izz li-mawlāna. The shape of the pen box with rounded ends, however, is typical of Persian wares, whereas those with square ends became popular in northern Mesopotamia in the early seventh/thirteenth century before becoming standard under the Mamluks. See Eva Baer, *Metalwork in Medieval Islamic Art*, Albany, 1983, pp. 70-72.

Shams al-din's brother 'Ala' al-Din was equally famous. He served in the Mongol administration under Hulagu, accompanying the warlord on his campaigns against the Isma'ilis. In 657/1259, a year after the capture of Baghdad, 'Ala' al-Din was appointed governor of 'Iraq-i 'Arab and Khuzistan, a post he continued to hold for more than two decades until he was charged with embezzlement and other crimes against the state. He died of apoplectic stroke on 4 Dhu'l-Hijja 681/5 March 1283 shortly before his brother's execution.

Like his brother, 'Ala' al-Din was also a highly cultured man, patron of poets and scholars. He is best known for his history of the Mongols, *Ta'rikh-i jahān gushā*. One of our major sources for the Mongol period, it was already popular in its own time, and a well-known copy in Paris transcribed only a few years after the author's death has a double-page frontispiece usually thought to depict the author, wearing a plain dark blue robe and wide brimmed hat, composing his work.⁸ To his right a later reader added the label 'Ala al-Din *sāhib dīwān* (chief minister), the title born by several members of the family, including his brother, and often given to 'Ala' al-din himself, although he was actually only governor. The seated figure records information from a Mongol authority standing to the right and wearing a gold brocaded surcoat over a dark brown coat. His elaborate dress shows that he was an important figure, presumably representing either Hulagu or his viceroy Amir Arghun.

The 689/1290 copy of the *Ta'rikh-i jahān gushā* can be attributed securely to Baghdad because of its similarities to two other illustrated manuscripts whose colophons indicate that they were made there in the same decade. The first and most famous is a copy of the *Rasā'il ikhwān al-safā'* (Epistles of the Sincere Brethren) transcribed, according to the colophon, at Madinat al-Salam (Baghdad) and finished in Shawwal 686/November 1287.⁹ The text, compiled by five scholars in mid- fourth/tenth-century Basra for an Isma'ili audience, is a series of fifty-two epistles divided into four sections dealing with different branches of science: mathematical sciences, bodily and natural sciences, physical and intellectual sciences, and theological sciences.¹⁰ Folios 3b-4a contain a

⁸ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, suppl. pers. 205; Richard Ettinghausen, "On some Mongol Miniatures", *Kunst des Orients*, 3 (1959), pp. 44-52; for a color reproduction, see Francis Richard, *Splendeurs persanes: Manuscrits du XIIIe au XVIIe siècles*, Paris, 1997, no. 7. Simpson, "Role of Baghdad", identified Baghdad as the place of production.

⁹ Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi 3638. Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, pp. 98-102.

¹⁰ On the *Rasā'il*, see Y. Marquet, "Ikhwan al-Ṭafā'", *ET*^{2nd}, III, p. 1071, and Farhad Daftary, *The Isma'ilis: Their History and Doctrines*, Cambridge, 1990, pp. 246-49.

large double-page illustration set beneath the end of the preface and the title of the work (fig. 1). The preface ends with the statement that it has been related in Zahir al-Din Abi Qasim al-Bayhaqī's *Tatimma ṣiṭwān al-ḥikma*¹¹ that five philosophers met and put together the treatise and names the five who did so (given here as Abu Sulayman Muhammad ibn Mas'ar al-Busti known as al-Maqdisi, Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Zahrun al-Zanjani, Abu Ahmad al-Nahrajuri, 'al-'Awfi, and Zayd ibn Rifa'a), specifying further that the first sage, al-Maqdisi, was responsible for the book's words (*alfāz al-kitāb*). The heading on the left gives the full rhyming title of the work, *Rasā'il ikhwān al-safā' wa khullān al-wafā'* (Epistles of the Sincere Brethren and Loyal Friends).

The identification of the figures in the double-page illustration and their connection to the five authors mentioned in the preface above has engendered a great deal of discussion. Bishr Farès, the first to publish the illustrations, believed that the frontispiece should be read as two separate parts, each showing the five authors, three below and two above in the balcony, on the right in a more contemplative mood and on the left holding a more lively discussion.¹² Richard Ettinghausen effectively countered Farès's argument, noting that the figures on the two pages are too different to portray the same people and that the beardless figure in the balcony on the right page could hardly represent a learned shaykh.¹³ Ettinghausen proposed instead that the right side portrayed a scribe next to two shaykhs, who together with the three main figures on the left comprise the five authors.

Ettinghausen's identification has basically held sway, although later scholars have added nuances to it, often as part of their studies of other topics. François Déroche, in his study of the Arabic book, explained the right page as a professional copyist writing down the text while the author in the center recited his work to an auditor on the right.¹⁴ His identification of two of the six figures as copyist and auditor would preclude the depiction of all five authors, a problem he did not address. Eva Hoffman, in her study of author por-

¹¹ On the author, see D. M. Dunlop, "al- Bayhakī, Zahir al-Din Abu 'l-Hasan 'Ali b. Zayd b. Funduk", *ET*^{2nd}, I, p. 1131. Born at Sabzawar in eastern Iran in 493/1100, he died in 565/1169-70. He was the author of seventy works, including a history of the region Bayhaq (not the famous *Ta'rikh-i Bayhāq* by Abu'l Fadl Bayhaqi) and an Arabic supplement (*tatimma*) to Abu Sulayman Sijistani's biographical work *Siṭwān al-hikma*.

¹² Bishr Farès, "Philosophe et jurisprudence illustrées par les Arabes: la querelle des images en Islam", *Mélanges Louis Massignon*, Damascus, 1957, II, pp. 77-109.

¹³ Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, pp. 101-02.

¹⁴ François Déroche, *Le livre manuscrit arabe: préludes à une histoire*, Paris, 2004, p. 48 and pl. 32.

traits in medieval Islamic manuscripts and their links with Classical Antiquity, suggested that each page of the frontispiece was a reinterpretation of the Late Antique group portrait representing Dioscorides, Hippocrates, and Plato on a single page, although she did not further identify the individual figures.¹⁵ Robert Hillenbrand, in the only full study devoted solely to the painting, suggested further that the desire for visual symmetry may have been at work and that the addition of the scribe was an elegant way of achieving this end.¹⁶ Marianna Shreve Simpson, in her study of front matter in Ilkhanid manuscripts, accepted Ettinghausen's identification of five authors and scribe and considered the double-page illustration the epitome of the author portrait or literary type of frontispiece.¹⁷

All of these explanations for the double frontispiece in the *Rasā'il ikhwān al-safā'* are problematic. The major difficulty lies in the identification of the figure who is writing: he is the same size as the other protagonists, and he wears the same turban as four of the other main figures—his counterpart to the right and the three main figures on the left page. I therefore propose a different interpretation linking image with text above, namely that the five main figures with turbans are the five philosophers who compiled the text, with the figure holding the pen (the left figure on the right page) to be identified as al-Maqdisi, the author whose name is given first in the preface and in full form—including his patronymic (*kunya*) given name (*ism*), genealogy (*nasab*), epithet of affiliation (*nisba*), and nickname (*laqab*)—and the author who was responsible, according to the final phrase above the painting, “for the book's words.” The sixth figure in the center on the right page—the only one of the main figures who does not wear a turban—must represent a different type of individual. The shawl over his head (*tarha* or *taylasān*) shows he represents a revered figure,¹⁸ and he may depict the source from whom the five gathered their information that was then written down by al-Maqdisi, either realistically a qadi or vizier (the type of individual who actually wore such a

¹⁵ Eva Hoffman, “The Author Portrait in Thirteenth-Century Arabic Manuscripts: A New Islamic Context for a Late-Antique Tradition”, *Muqarnas*, 10 (1993), p. 7, n. 7, and fig. 5.

¹⁶ Robert Hillenbrand, “Erudition Exalted: The Double Frontispiece to the Epistles of the Sincere Brethren”, *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, ed. Linda Komaroff, Leiden, 2006, p. 187, n. 22.

¹⁷ Marianna Shreve Simpson, “In the Beginning: Frontispieces and Front Matter in Ilkhanid and Injuid Manuscripts”, *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, ed. Linda Komaroff, Leiden, 2006, pp. 226-27.

¹⁸ On the shawl, see W. Björkman, “Kalansuwa , Kulansiya”, *EI*^{2nd}, XIII, p. 508, and idem, “Tulband”, *EI*^{2nd}, X, p. 607.

shawl), or symbolically a Prophet or imam (the type of person shown in contemporary painting wearing a shawl and the type of person to whom the work is sometimes ascribed).¹⁹ As Hillenbrand also noted, the painter placed an event that took place in fourth/tenth-century Basra in a contemporary setting: a two-story brick building, which may well represent the most famous contemporary center of learning in Baghdad, the Mustansiriyya Madrasa (fig. 2), whose riparian setting is indicated by the blue water at the corners of the composition.²⁰

As Déroche correctly pointed out, the right-hand illustration in the *Rasā'il ikhwān al-safā'*—like the left side of the frontispiece in the slightly later *Ta'rikh-i jahān gushā*—shows how authors in the medieval Muslim lands gathered their material from the spoken word.²¹ What distinguishes these two frontispieces from other author portraits in contemporary manuscripts, however, is the precise depiction of the author writing down his work.²² Other frontispieces with author portraits, many of them derived from late Antique models, typically show the main figure sitting, lecturing, or giving permission to students to circulate his work. In contrast to the oral method of transmission, these two frontispieces are the first surviving evidence to show the written method. They illustrate the transition between oral and written and the increasing role played by written work from the seventh/thirteenth century, an innovation caused in part by the increased availability of paper.²³

The names of the authors given above the illustration in the *Rasā'il* confirms the method of written transmission. Al-Maqdisi's father's name, known from other sources and copies of the text as Ma'shar, is written here as Ma'sar,

¹⁹ Hillenbrand, "Erudition Exalted", p. 205, following Simpson, "Role of Baghdad", p. 99, notes that Prophets are often shown wearing such a headscarf.

²⁰ A suggestion made by Hillenbrand, "Erudition Exalted", p. 200, n. 75.

²¹ This is still the case. When Muslim scholars in the 1920s wanted to compile a standard edition of the Qur'an with regularized readings and numbering, they did not collage texts from fragments with traditional orthography but relied on the oral and written traditions of the "science of readings" (*ilm al-qirā'āt*) to produce what is known as the Standard Egyptian Edition of the Qur'an. See Sheila S. Blair, "Written, Spoken, Envisioned: The Many Facets of the Qur'an in Art", *The Qur'an in Art*, ed. Fahmida Suleman, London, 2007, p. 276 and n. 18, citing William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion*, New York, 1993, and Efim Rezman, "The Qur'an and Its World, VI. Emergence of the Canon: The Struggle for Uniformity", *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 4/2 (June 1998), pp. 13–54.

²² Hoffman, "Author Portrait" and Hillenbrand, "Erudition Exalted", pp. 187–91, discuss and illustrate the numerous author portraits in contemporary manuscripts.

²³ Jonathan M. Bloom, *Paper before Print*, New Haven, 2001, pp. 178–201.

without the dots that distinguish *shīn* from *sīn*. The lack of dots might be a simple omission, but the calligrapher Buzurgmihr ibn Muhammad al-Tusi made further mistakes with the name of the second author's father. Instead of Harun, he wrote Zahrūn, carefully pointing the *zā'* with a dot. This is a visual mistake made while copying, not an oral one that might occur when taking dictation. The text, like the illustration, shows that transmission from a written exemplar had become the norm in seventh/thirteenth-century Baghdad.

In addition to the *Rasā'il*, the other illustrated manuscript whose colophon shows that it was made in Baghdad in the late seventh/thirteenth century (and also preserved in Istanbul) is a copy of Sa'd al-Din Varavini's *Marzubānnāma*.²⁴ According to the colophon, al-Murtada ibn Abi Tahir ibn Ahmad al-Kashi completed the book (*al-kitāb*) in the eastern district of Baghdad on Thursday 10 Ramadan 698/11 June 1299. The second of its three paintings (f. 5a) shows the author, identified as a scholar by his turban and gray beard, holding a small book that presumably represents his own work. He is seated on two cushions addressing an attentive group of four scholars with similar turbans and beards who kneel together on the other side of a gold *kursī* with a large volume, perhaps a large copy of the Qur'an. The text describes the agonies of literary creation, and Simpson suggested that the picture shows Sa'd al-Din describing the composition of the *Marzubānnāma*, but given the many other seventh/thirteenth-century author portraits, it could also represent the author reading his work aloud to pupils.²⁵ In contrast to the other two illustrated frontispieces that are innovative in depicting written transmission, this one shows the more traditional oral method.

These three manuscripts, one in Arabic and two in Persian, represent some of the different types of illustrated codices produced in Baghdad in the late seventh/thirteenth century. All are transcribed in *naskh*, the round script that had become standard for transcribing both Arabic and Persian, with different scripts used for headings and other incidentals. The three range in quality, from the fine hand used in the *Rasā'il*, with headings in *muhaqqaq*, to the rougher one used for the *Marzubānnāma*, with headings in an antiquated kufic.

²⁴ Istanbul, Archeological Museum, ms. 216; the discovery of this manuscript allowed Simpson, "Role of Baghdad", to secure the provenance of the *Rasā'il* as Baghdad.

²⁵ The closest comparison is the double frontispiece in an undated astrological treatise entitled *Risālāt al-Sūfi fī'l kawākib* (Tehran, Reza Abbasi Museum, ms. 570) discussed in Hillenbrand, "Erudition Exalted", pp. 189-90 and illustrated in color in N. Pourjavady, ed., *Splendour of Iran*, London, 2001, III, pp. 268-69.

All three illustrated manuscripts pale in comparison with the finest produced in the city at the time: copies of the Qur'an, especially those transcribed by Yaqut al-Musta'simi (d. 697/1297-98 or 698/1298-99), the cynosure of calligraphers (*qiblat al-kuttāb*) who—along with Ibn Muqla (d. 328/940) and Ibn al-Bawwab (d. 413/1022)—made up the great triumvirate of Baghdadi calligraphers that canonized the six round scripts (*aqlām al-sitta*).²⁶ Born a slave in the opening decade of the thirteenth century, Yaqut was brought to Baghdad and studied calligraphy there with the leading master of the day, Safi al-din 'Abd al-Mu'min al-Urmawi (d. 693/1294).²⁷ When the Mongols seized Baghdad, Yaqut is reputed to have taken refuge in a minaret where, having thoughtfully brought pen and ink but no paper, he wrote on a linen towel (perhaps his turban?), an amusing vignette often depicted in copies of Qadi Ahmad's eleventh/seventeenth-century treatise on calligraphy.²⁸

Several works penned by Yaqut on the eve of the Mongol invasion have survived,²⁹ but his career flourished from the 660s/1260s when cultural life in Baghdad revived under the patronage of the Juvaynis. Yaqut himself is said to have taught calligraphy to Shams al-Din and to 'Ala' al-Din's children. The calligrapher also served as librarian of the Mustansiriyya Madrasa, working under the historian Ibn al-Fuwati who was appointed director there in

²⁶ See the brief biographies in Mehdi Bayani, *Ahwāl-i āthār-i khūshnvisān*, Tehran 1363/1984, no. 741, pp. 1227-31; David James, *The Master Scribes: Qur'ans of the 11th to the 14th Centuries AD*, ed. Julian Raby, Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art 2, London, 1992, pp. 58-59; Sheila R. Canby, "Yākūt al-Musta'simi", *EF*^{2nd}, XI, p. 263, and Sheila S. Blair, "'Yāqūt and his followers", *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 9/3 (Sept. 2003), pp. 39-47.

²⁷ E. Neubauer, "Safi al-Din al-Urmawi", *EF*^{2nd}, VIII, p. 805. Well versed in Arabic language, literature and history as well as penmanship, al-Urmawi was appointed copyist at the library founded by al-Musta'sim and later became head of the chancery (*dīwān al-inshā'*). He is best remembered as a musician and theoretician of music.

²⁸ Several are reproduced in Vladimir Minorsky's translation of Qadi Ahmad's treatise, *Calligraphers and Painters: A Treatise by Qādi Ahmad, Son of Mīr-Munshī* (Circa A.H. 1015/A.D. 1606), Washington, DC, 1959.

²⁹ The list of Yaqut's works by Bayani, *Ahwāl-i āthār-i khūshnvisān*, no. 741, pp. 1227-31, includes 27 examples, drawn mainly from Iranian and Turkish collections. Manuscripts made on the eve of the Mongol invasion include two collections of poetry dated 652/1254 in the Gulistan Library, Tehran, and two Qur'an manuscripts, one dated the same year in the same collection and a second one dated 655/1257 in the Topkapı Palace Library, no. A6734; see F. E. Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi. Arapça Yazmalar Kataloğu*, Istanbul, 1962, no. 16. Bayani also mentions a Qur'an manuscript dated Rabi' II 633/December 1235-January 1236 in the Mahdavi collection.

679/1280-81,³⁰ and possibly the setting depicted in the illustration in the *Rasā'il* produced just at this time.

Like his contemporaries, Yaqut typically used *naskh* to transcribe literary works, such as a copy of Sa'di's *Gulistān* dated 668/1269-70,³¹ and he perfected that script and several other of the Six Pens for Qur'an manuscripts. He used the small *rayhan* and *naskh* for single-volume copies, including one dated 668/1269-70 and later endowed to the shrine of Shaykh Safi in Ardabil (fig. 3), and the large *muhaqqaq* for thirty-part manuscripts, including one dated 681/1282-83.³² The latest surviving Qur'an manuscript in Yaqut's hand seems to be a copy dated 4 Sha'ban 693 / 30 June 1294 in the Turk ve Islam Museum in Istanbul. According to Qadi Ahmad, Yaqut practiced copying two *juz'* daily such that each month he produced two complete copies of the Qur'an. The manuscripts were supposedly numbered at the end (though this is not recording in any surviving example), and the eleventh/seventeenth-century chronicler reported seeing number 364.³³

Such a large number of Qur'an manuscripts was needed in part because individual professors in the city's madrasas used individual copies. The Baghdadi scholar Ibn al-Tiqtaqa reported that in 698/1298 when Ghazan, the Ilkhanid who had converted to Islam three years earlier, visited the Mustansiriyā Madrasa, he encountered scholars who were reading from Qur'an manuscripts held in their hands.³⁴ Like the illustrations from the *Rasā'il* and

³⁰ F. Rosenthal, "Ibn al-Fuwatī", *ET*^{2nd}, III, p. 769. On the building, see Tariq Jawad al-Janabi, *Studies in Mediaeval Iraqi Architecture*, Baghdad, 1982, pp. 73-76.

³¹ Tehran, Gulistan Palace Library: illustrated in G.-H. Yusufi, "Calligraphy", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, IV, p. 688, pl. XXXIX.

³² The manuscript endowed to Ardabil is now in the National Museum in Iran (no. 4393); Mehdi Bahrami, *Rāhnāma-yi Ganjīna-yi Qur'ān dar mūza-yi irān bāstān*, Tehran, 1328/1950, no. 46. According to the catalog, it is transcribed in a small *naskh* with fifteen lines per page. I thank Mahnaz Rahimifar for providing me with a photograph. Manuscripts in *rayhan* include one copied in Sha'ban 681/November 1282 at Baghdad, sold at Sotheby's in 1977, and now in the collection of the Sultan of Oman; see David James, *Qur'ans of the Mamluks*, London, 1988, no. 36. The manuscript was rebound under the Ottomans in the tenth/sixteenth or early eleventh/seventeenth century when the marginal illumination was added. The thirty-part manuscript in *muhaqqaq* is dispersed, including the Chester Beatty Library, the Topkapı Library and the Khalili Collection; see James, *Qur'ans of the Mamluks*, no. 11.

³³ Qādī Ahmad Mīr Munshī Qummī, *Gulistān-i hunar*, ed. A. mad Suhaylī-Khānsārī, Tehran, 1352/1974, p. 20; Minorsky trans. p. 59.

³⁴ J. Kritzeck, "Ibn al-tiqtaqā and the Fall of Baghdad", *The World of Islam: Studies in honour of Philip K. Hitti*, ed. J. Kritzeck and R. B. Winder, London and New York, 1959, p. 169; Simpson, "Role of Baghdad", p. 93 and n. 15.

Juwavyni, Ibn Tiqtaqa's description shows that learning in Baghdad at this time had switched from oral to written. The Mustansiriyya was but one of many madrasas functioning at this time, and Ibn Battuta and other later chroniclers reported that the Nizamiyya and other schools had resumed their functions.³⁵

Yaqut's canonized style of the Six Pens set the model for other calligraphers who worked in Baghdad. Some came from afar. All three of the illustrated manuscripts made in Baghdad, for example, are signed by scribes with Iranian *nisbas*: the copy of the *Rasa'il* by someone from Tus, a city in Khurasan, whose name Buzurgmihr shows him clearly to be Persian; the copy of the *Ta'rikh-i jahān gushā* by someone from Khwaf, likewise in Khurasan; and the *Marzubānnāma* by someone from Kashan, a city in central Iran. Calligraphers from the Arab lands also flocked to Baghdad. One of the most famous was Sharaf al-Din Muhammad ibn Sharaf ibn Yusuf known as Ibn al-Wahid. Born in Damascus in 648/1249-50, he traveled to Baalbek and then studied in Baghdad.³⁶ Other calligraphers were local. Ahmad al-Suhrawardi, for example, was the scion of one of the most highly respected families in Baghdad whose eponym had founded the sufi order (*tāriqa*) of the Suhrawardiyya.³⁷

Some of these calligraphers studied directly under the master. This was the case with Ibn al-Wahid and many of the first generation of Yaqut's six followers, including Ahmad al-Suhrawardi.³⁸ Some of them, in turn, moved elsewhere. Ibn al-Wahid, for example, went to Cairo, where he entered the service of the Mamluk amir Baybars, producing for him a copy of the Qur'an that is justly acclaimed one of the masterpieces of early eighth/fourteenth-century calligraphy: a seven-part manuscript dated 704-5/1304-6 and now in the British Library.³⁹ Yusuf Mashhadi, mentioned in Safavid treatises as one of

³⁵ Mentioned in Simpson, *ibid.* The Nizamiyya is no longer extant, but for the Shara-biyya, now known as the 'Abbasid palace, see Jannabi, *Mediaeval Iraqi Architecture*, pp. 77-82.

³⁶ For his biography, recorded by both al-Safadi and Ibn Hajar, see James, *Qur'ans of the Mamluks*, pp. 37-39.

³⁷ Brief biography in Bayani, *Ahwal*, 1024-26 and Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, p. 249 and n. 44.

³⁸ On the question of disentangling the names and generations of Yaqut's followers, see Blair, "Yaqut and his followers".

³⁹ London, BL Add. 22406-12; James, *Qur'ans of the Mamluks*, no. 1; Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, fig. 8.13; Colin Baker, *Qur'an Manuscripts: Calligraphy, Illumination, Design*, London, 2007.

the six followers of Yaqut, is said to studied with Yaqut for a long time but then left Iraq for Tabriz where he ended his days teaching ‘Abdallah Sayrafi.⁴⁰

When Yaqut’s students emigrated, they took with them the techniques of book making and styles of calligraphy they had learned in Baghdad. One feature was a standard “baghdadi” size of paper (approximately 70 x 100 cm).⁴¹ The *Rasā’il*, the *Marzubānnāma*, and various Qur’an manuscripts transcribed by Yaqut, including the thirty-volume one dated 681/1282-3, are all medium-sized, written on sheets of one-eighth *baghdadi* size. Yaqut used sheets twice that size (one-quarter *baghdadi*) for a large single-volume Qur’an manuscript dated 685/1286. Even larger sheets were used for more splendid, very large Qur’an manuscripts prepared at the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth century. Ahmad al-Suhrawardi used half-*baghdadi* sheets for a thirty-volume copy made between 701 and 708 (1301-8),⁴² as did Ibn al-Wahid in his copy made for Baybars. The largest is the full *baghdadi* size used for an enormous thirty-volume Qur’an manuscript made at Baghdad between 706 and 713 (1306-13), endowed to the tomb of Sultan Uljaytu at Sultaniyya and now dispersed.⁴³ This large *baghdadi* size then became standard for the magnificent Qur’an manuscripts made for the Mamluks in the later eighth/fourteenth century and associated with al-Ashraf Sha‘ban (reg. 764-78/1363-77).⁴⁴

Styles of illumination also moved, and to meet the demand for more and fancier book, work became more specialized. None of the manuscripts penned by Yaqut is signed by a separate illuminator, but by the next generation, as the amount of decoration increased, pairs of specialized calligraphers and illuminators became common. The calligrapher Ahmad al-Suhrawardi, for example, often worked with the illuminator Muhammad ibn Aybak ibn ‘Abdallah, and the calligrapher Ibn al-Wahid often worked with the illuminator Sandal. Decoration itself became a hierarchical business. Sandal’s assistant Aydughdi ibn ‘Abdallah al-Badri, who outlined (*zammaka*) the letters in the Baybars Qur’an, then became a decorator who in turn was assisted by another “outliner,” the

⁴⁰ Qadi Ahmad, p. 21, trans. Minorsky, 61. Blair, “Yaqut and his followers”, n. 37. No works in his hand are known.

⁴¹ On the *Baghdadi* sheet, see Bloom, *Paper before Print*, pp. 62-64 and Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, pp. 250-52 and fig. 7.3.

⁴² James, *Qur’ans of the Mamluks*, no. 39, his so-called “anonymous Baghdad Qur’an”; Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, fig. 7.2.

⁴³ James, *Qur’ans of the Mamluks*, no. 40, his so-called Uljaytu’s Baghdad Qur’an”. Illuminated by Muhammad ibn Aybak, it was probably transcribed by Ahmad al-Suhrawardi.

⁴⁴ James, *Qur’ans of the Mamluks*, nos. 24, 26, and 28-35; Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, pp. 321-23 and fig. 8.2

draftsman (*al-rassām*) ‘Ali ibn Muhammad, known as the left-handed (*al-a’sar*), on a Qur’an manuscript prepared a decade later for the Mamluk sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qala’un.⁴⁵ The third person who worked on the Baybars Qur’an, Muhammad ibn Mubadir, evidently trained in Baghdad, as shown by various features of his illumination that are typical of manuscripts made in the Ilkhanid domains, such as the interlocking tile patterns, strap-work squares, and beveled interior corners.⁴⁶ Sandal too seems to have trained in Baghdad, for his work shares many features with the illumination in the Qur’an manuscript penned by Yaqut in 681/1282 (fig. 4), such as the main panel decorated with a central geometric design repeated in the corners and the border with gold palmette scrolls on a gridded ground and a small tri-lobed projecting into the middle of the side margin.⁴⁷

Study with the master and emigration of his pupil was thus one method of artistic transmission from Baghdad. Another was through an exemplar. This was the period when calligraphers regularly penned short specimens of their work known in Arabic as *qit’a*. With the increasing prestige of individual hands, these specimens were collected and mounted in albums that began to be assembled from the eighth/fourteenth century.⁴⁸ Works by Yaqut, for example, are preserved in several albums, beginning with the one identified in a later frontispiece as Baysunghur’s Album of Seven Masters and containing calligraphies in the Six Pens by Yaqut and six followers.⁴⁹ Like the 681/1282 Qur’an manuscript by Yaqut, the Baysunghur album was refurbished at the

⁴⁵ The manuscript was transcribed by Shadhi ibn Muhammad ibn Shadhi in 713/1313; James, *Qur’ans of the Mamluks*, no. 6; Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, p. 327 and fig. 8.5.

⁴⁶ On Muhammad ibn Mubadir, see James, *Qur’ans of the Mamluks*, pp. 40–47. His earliest known work is a copy of work by Ahmad ibn Yusuf al-Tifashi on precious stones, *Azhār al-afkār fī jawāhir al-ahjār*, dated Safar 698/June 1298 (Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, no. 4033). He also illuminated a Qur’an manuscript transcribed by Muhammad ibn ‘Abdallah al-Khazraji (James, *Qur’ans of the Mamluks*, no. 4).

⁴⁷ James (*Qur’ans of the Mamluks*, p. 110) also noticed the similarities between the Yaqut Qur’an made in Baghdad and the work of Sandal, but thought that the illumination was distinctly Mamluk and therefore explained the connection by a rather torturous route that the Qur’an manuscript was originally undecorated and then came to Cairo where the illumination was added by a member of the Sandal workshop before the margins were added in Ottoman times. Such an explanation seems unduly complicated.

⁴⁸ David Roxburgh has done the most extensive work on these albums; see *The Persian Album 1400–1600: From Dispersal to Collection*, New Haven, 2005.

⁴⁹ Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, H2310; David Roxburgh, “Catalogue of Scripts by the Seven Masters, H2310: A Timurid Album at the Ottoman Court”, *Art Turc, Turkish Art: 10th International Congress of Turkish Art, Geneva 17–23 September 1995*, Geneva, 1999, pp. 587–97; Roxburgh, *Persian Album*, chap. 2.

Ottoman court, probably ca. 1000/1600, a testament to the resurgence of Yaqut's importance at this time.

These calligraphic specimens could also be used as models to be reproduced in other materials, and one of the major innovations of the period is the extension of calligraphy to other media, notably architectural revetment in stucco and tile. Qadi Ahmad mentioned, for example, that the calligrapher Ahmad al-Suhrawardi designed the inscriptions for many buildings in Baghdad, including the main mosque where masons reproduced the entire Surat al-Kahf (Chapter 18, with 110 verses) in brick.⁵⁰ The calligrapher 'Abdullah Sayrafi began as a master in the making of glazed tiles (*kāshī*) whose writings decorated many buildings in Tabriz.⁵¹

In the second half of the eighth/fourteenth century, Baghdad continued to be an important center of calligraphy, and one final example—the career of the calligrapher Ahmad Shah—shows how the styles canonized by Yaqut remained the standard in multiple media and were disseminated to various places.⁵² Born in Tabriz in the early eighth/fourteenth century, Ahmad Shah became a leading calligrapher under the Jalayirids, one of the Ilkhanid successor states that ruled Iraq and western Iran. According to Qadi Ahmad, Ahmad Shah worked on the restorations at Najaf undertaken by the Jalayirid ruler Shaykh 'Uways (reg. 757-76/1356-74), thereby earning the nickname *zarīn qalam* (Golden Pen). Ahmad Shah also designed the inscriptions for the major monument in Baghdad, the Mirjaniyya, the funerary mosque-madrassa complex built for the Jalayirid governor Mirjan in 758/1357, as well as the adjacent khan dated 760/1359.⁵³ The founder was a freedman of the Ilkhanid sultan Uljaytu who became governor of Baghdad. Although much damaged and partly destroyed, the Mirjaniyya preserves the greatest amount of epigraphy on any building in Iraq, including an extensive endowment text (*waqfiyya*). The one over the entrance is signed Ahmad Shah *al-naqqāsh* (the designer) known as *zarīn qalam al-tabrizī* (Golden Pen of Tabriz). Another inscription probably removed from the iwan and now in the Museum in the Abbasid Palace is signed Ahmad Shah *al-naqqāsh al-tabrizī* (the designer of Tabriz). A third inscription over the doorway to the khan (fig. 5) is signed Ahmad Shah *al-naqqāsh* (the designer) known as *zarīn qalam* (Golden Pen). All the inscrip-

⁵⁰ Qadi Ahmad, ed. Suhaylī-Khānsārī, p. 21; trans. Minorsky, p. 60.

⁵¹ Qadi Ahmad, ed. Suhaylī-Khānsārī p. 24; trans. Minorsky, p. 60.

⁵² Sheila S. Blair, "Artists and Patronage in Late Fourteenth-Century Iran in the light of two Catalogues of Islamic Metalwork", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 48/1 (1985), pp. 53-59.

⁵³ Jannabi, *Mediaeval Iraqi Architecture*, pp. 113-45.

tions are executed in brick in a fine *thuluth* on a floral ground in a style immediately reminiscent of that of Yaqut.

But Ahmad Shah did not remain in Baghdad for long: six years later in 766/1364-5, he signed a Qur'an manuscript now in the Reza 'Abbasi Museum in Tehran using the epithet *zarīn qalam al-shīrāzī* (Golden Pen of Shiraz).⁵⁴ Ahmad Shah may have moved to Fars for in that year the Muzaffarid prince Mahmud began ruling Shiraz as a figurehead for Shaykh 'Uways. While there, Ahmad Shah apparently commissioned a candlestick with a prayer invoking blessings and extended life as long as the pigeon coos on its owner, Ahmad Shah *naqqāsh* (designer).⁵⁵ The candlestick bears many hallmarks of the typical Shirazi style in terms of form (a body with incurving sides, marked angular moldings, and a dished shoulder), decorative program (a series of horizontal borders and friezes divided by four roundels), motifs (background of inter-connecting Y-shapes, roundels with six-spoke paddle-wheels, polylobed rosettes, birds flanking a stylized plant, double-handed guilloche), and epigraphy (stylized interlaced *alif-lām-alif*).⁵⁶ It is clearly a local product of Fars made to order for a native of Tabriz who had worked in Najaf and Baghdad, the calligrapher Ahmad Shah.

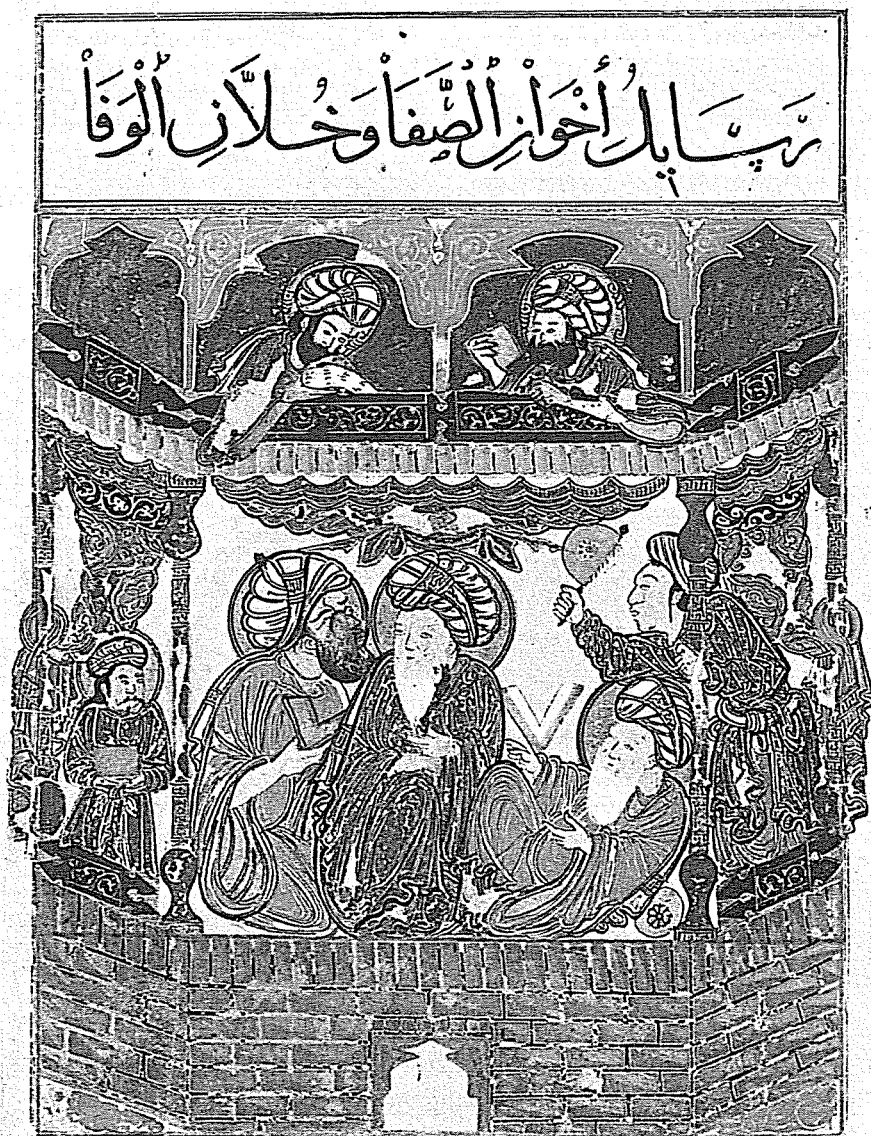
Like their modern counterparts, calligraphers and artists in Ilkhanid times moved to meet the demands of the market. But throughout the period Baghdad remained a center for the production of fine books and the capital whence the style of the Six Pens canonized by Yaqut was disseminated and transferred to other media by the movement of people and works of art.

⁵⁴ Mentioned in A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World 8th-18th Centuries*, Victoria and Albert Museum Catalogue, London, 1982, p. 152. When I visited the museum reserves in the 1990s, they were unable to find the manuscript.

⁵⁵ Louvre, Arts Musulman no. 7530, published in A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, *Le Bronze Iranien*, Paris, 1973, 56-57 and illustrated in A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*, fig. 57.

⁵⁶ Ahmad Shah's candlestick can in turn be related to three others of similar shape and decoration: one in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyons, a second in the Cleveland Museum of Art, and a chamfered example in the Louvre (Arts Musulmane no. 6034).

ILLUSTRATIONS



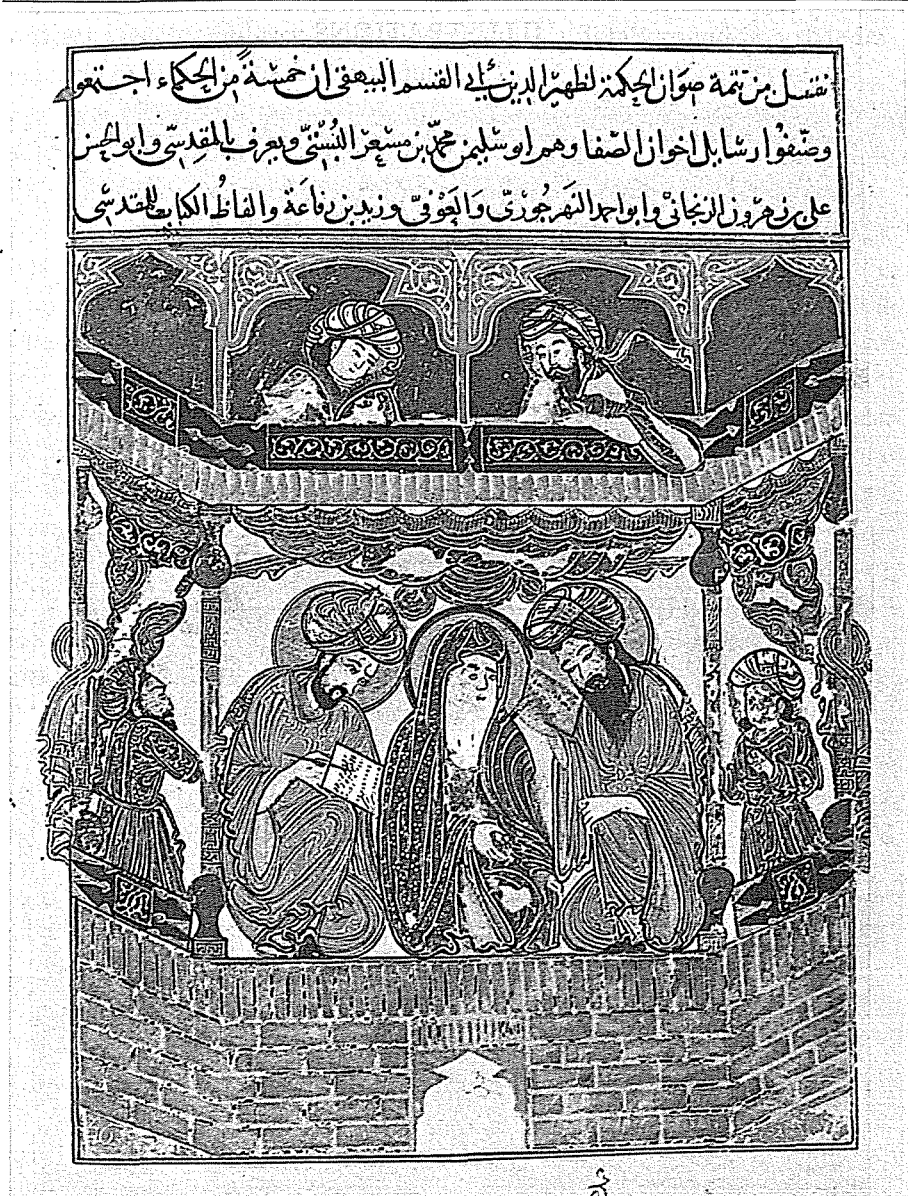


Fig. 1: Double-page illustration showing the authors from the *Rasā'il ikhwān al-safā'* (Epistles of the Sincere Brethren) copied at Madinat al-Salam (Baghdad) and finished in Shawwal 686/November 1287; Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi 3638, fols. 3b-4a

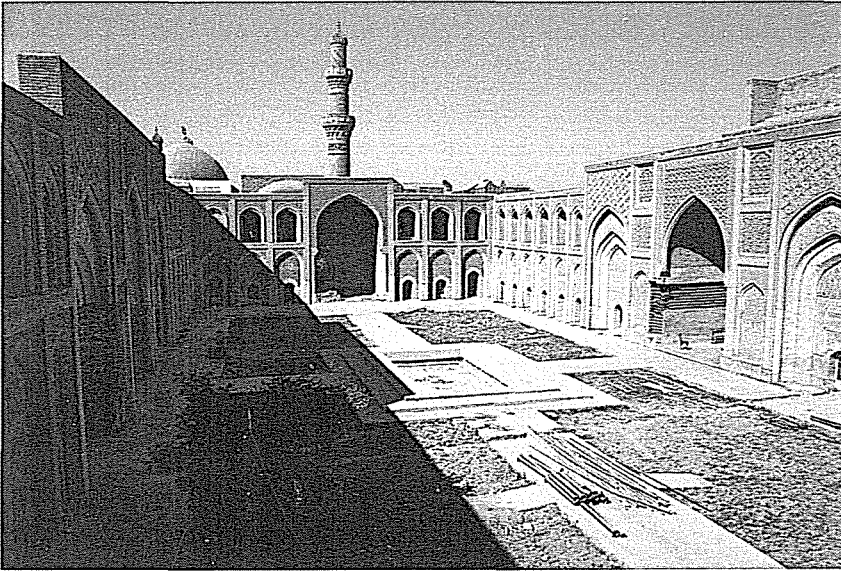


Fig. 2: Courtyard of the Mustansiriyya Madrasa, Baghdad; 1227-34

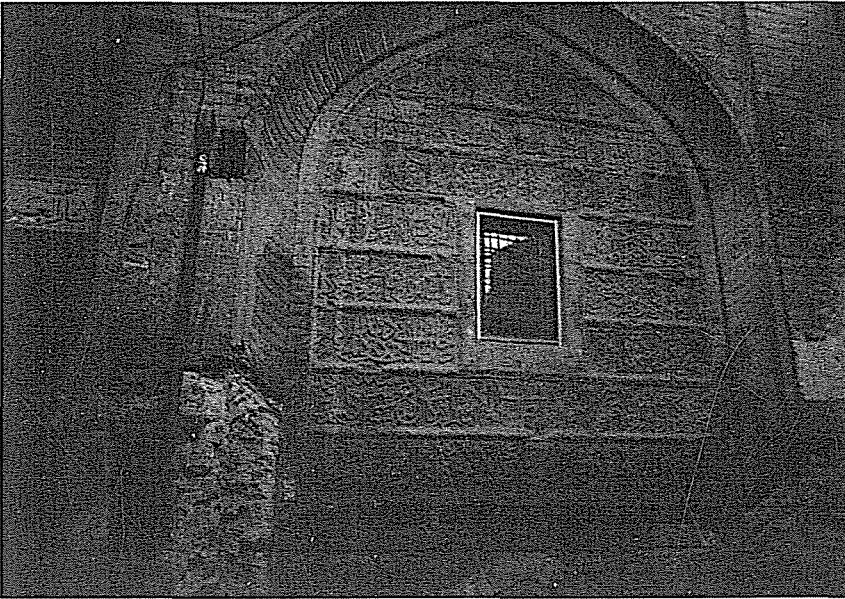


Fig. 5: Stucco inscription over the entrance to the Khan Mirjan dated 760/1359 and signed by Ahmad Shah *naqqāsh* (the designer) known as *zarīn qalam* (Golden Pen)



Fig. 3: Colophon from a Qur'an manuscript in *naskh* copied at Baghdad by Yaqt al-Musta'simi in 668/1269-70; Tehran, National Museum, no. 4393

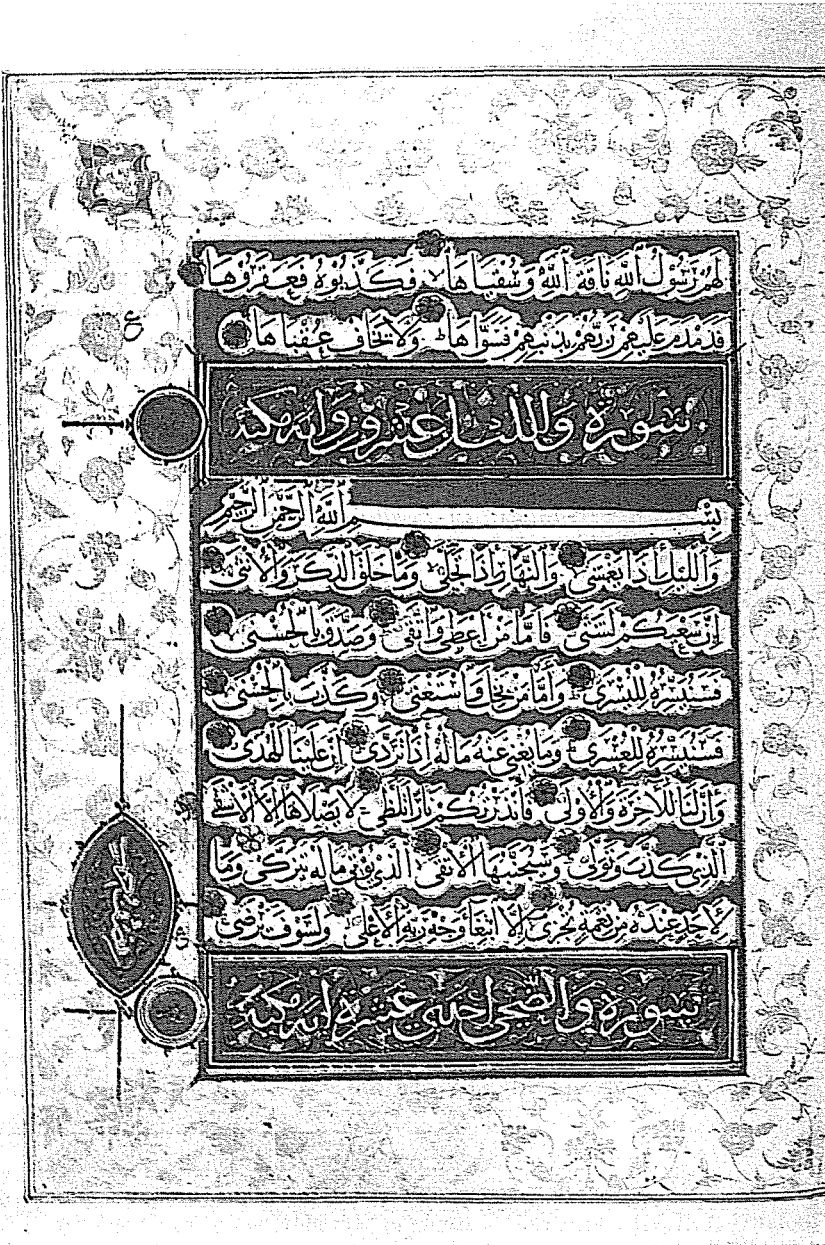


Fig. 4: Page from a Qur'an manuscript in *rayhān* copied at Baghdad by Yaqut al-Musta'simi and finished in Sha'ban 681/November 1282; Brunei, collection of the Sultan of Oman.