SULTAN AHMED III (r.1703-1730) AS A CALLIGRAPHER AND PATRON OF CALLIGRAPHY

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Declaration for PhD thesis

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the calligraphic works of Sultan Ahmed III (r.1703-1730), whose reign marked a turning point in the history of Ottoman calligraphy both with his personal contributions and his patronage. The initial hypothesis proposed in this thesis is that Sultan Ahmed III, both as an artist and patron of calligraphy, established the basis of a new *genre* in Ottoman calligraphy with his technically and formally unique approach. I suggest that in a period of political and economic decline, the Ottomans' thirst for an image of a new ideal ruler prompted Ahmed III to create a group of calligraphic works that were mostly available to the public and which were primarily for message-giving. This thesis will not only analyse calligraphic works of the Sultan in detail but will also investigate the role of calligraphy in Ahmed III's political agenda for establishing a new idealised image of the sultan as both pious and omniscient to replace the diminishing image of the sultan as a victorious warrior. I offer a review of the social and cultural atmosphere in early 18th century İstanbul in Chapter 1, providing a full portrait of the Sultan. To establish the context necessary to analyse the innovative and message-giving nature of Ahmed III's calligraphic works, I suggest an expanded art-historical framework of the Ottoman calligraphic tradition and the Sultan's "calligraphy salon" in Chapter 2, with particular emphasize on the role of the Sultan's calligraphy master, Hāfız Osman Efendi (d.1698), in the formation of the Sultan's innovative approach. Chapter 3 outlines technical and stylistic innovations observed in calligraphic panels and monumental inscriptions of Ahmed III and their message-giving nature. In Chapters 4 and 5, I analyse Ahmed III's calligraphic albums, *Qur'an* manuscripts and his innovative approach to the *Tughra*, the Ottoman royal monogram. Chapter 6 is a survey of Ahmed III's innovative signatures. The last chapter questions the Sultan's legacy and investigates his impact on Ottoman calligraphy both during and after his lifetime.

ABBREVIATIONS

AK: Atatürk Library, İstanbul

ANK: Ayşegül Nadir Collection

AMK: İstanbul Archaeological Museum Library

ARAB: Arabic

BA: Ottoman State Archives, İstanbul

CAT: Catalogue

CMA: The Cleveland Museum of Art

ENL: Egypt National Library, Cairo

IUK: İstanbul University Library

IUNEK: İstanbul University Library - Section of Rare Manuscripts

KC: The Khalili Collection, London

MK: Millet Library, İstanbul

NM: The Nevşehir Museum, Nevşehir

NOK: The Neslişah Osmanoğlu Collection

OADB: The Directory of Ottoman State Archives

OTT: Ottoman Turkish

PERS: Persian

SSM: Sakıp Sabancı Museum, İstanbul

SK: The Süleymaniye Library, İstanbul

TIEM: Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, İstanbul

TSM: Topkapı Palace Museum, İstanbul

TSM-B: Topkapı Palace Museum, The Baghdad Collection

TSM-EH: Topkapı Palace Museum, Treasury of Trusts

TSM-HA: Topkapı Palace Museum, The Harem Collection

TSM-HSD: Topkapı Palace Museum, The Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet

TSMK: Topkapı Palace Museum Library

TSMK.A: Topkapı Palace Museum, The Library of Ahmed III

TSM-R: Topkapı Palace Museum, The Revan Collection

TFC: Tanman Family Collection, İstanbul

TVHSM: The Turkish Pious Foundations Calligraphic Arts Museum, İstanbul

VAM: Victoria and Albert Museum, London

YSM: The Yıldız Palace Museum, İstanbul

KEY OTTOMAN CALLIGRAPHER-SULTANS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT AND THEIR REIGNAL YEARS

Bayazid II (r.1481-1512)

Ahmed I (r.1603-1617)

Mustafa II (r.1695-1703)

Ahmed III (r.1703-1730)

Mustafa III (r.1757-1774)

Selim III (r.1789-1807)

Mahmud II (r.1808-1839)

Abdülmecid (r.1839-1861)

Abdülaziz (r.1861-1876)

CONVENTIONS

Translations

Unless otherwise stated, the translations of the poetry and religious texts in this thesis are my own.

Transliterations

The transliteration system used here for Arabic and Persian is that of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMS). Ottoman Turkish texts have been transliterated into Modern Turkish.

Dimensions

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INTRODUCTION

Overview

In İstanbul, during the summer of 2003, I noticed two outstanding monumental inscriptions located on the two public fountains built by Sultan Ahmed III, the first in front of the Topkapı Palace and the second on the shores of Üsküdar. Thinking that these were the only two inscriptions composed by a sultan for public viewing, I decided it would be of great interest to investigate Ahmed III as a calligrapher in order to determine his use of calligraphy and the limits of his artistic agenda.

I gradually realized the fact that calligraphic works by the Sultan have attracted little scholarly attention. What fascinated me most was the openly 'message-giving' nature of his works, such as the calligraphic panel located in his mother's mosque, on which he penned a *hadith* of Prophet Muhammad; "Paradise is under the feet of mothers". Having examined this panel in the Yeni Vālide Mosque in Üsküdar in 2004, I decided to devote my doctoral research to the calligraphic oeuvre of Ahmed III.

In previous research no attempt has been made to undertake an individual analysis on the calligraphic works of the Sultan. The history of Ottoman calligraphy has been dominated by research on master calligraphers, namely Şeyh Hamdullah (d.1520), Ahmed Karahisārī (d.1556), Hāfız Osmān (d.1689) and Mustafa Rākım (d.1826).[1] This is understandable given the small number of publications in this field. In this respect, my study aims to lay new ground and provide a better understanding of the calligraphic art of Ahmed III.

The stereotype of Ottoman calligraphy as a static tradition has obscured some highly important shifts in the contextual meaning, format transitions and stylistic innovations of the genre which came to light with Ahmed III's personal contributions to this artistic practice. This study is about him and his contributions to calligraphy, which could have been accomplished only by a sultan and not by an ordinary calligrapher. It is about the ground-breaking nature of Ahmed III's works,

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[1] Professor Muhiddin Serin's *Şeyh Hamdullah*, Dr. Ömer Faruk Şehsuvaroğlu's *Ömer Faruk Efendi* and Dr. Süleyman Berk's *Mustafa Rakım Efendi* are amongst recent publications.

paying particular attention to the innovative calligraphic formats, compositions and techniques he employed. Furthermore, his calligraphy will be regarded not only as art but also as a tool of self-representation. This is vital in exploring the impact of his affinity for calligraphy on his political career.

In Chapter II, I will start with a detailed investigation of Ahmed III's calligraphy circle, including his calligraphy teacher Hāfız Osmān and calligraphic members of his court. This will show the increasing prestige and social status of those involved in calligraphy among the Ottoman ruling class in this period. In order to demonstrate the court's increasing passion for calligraphy I will draw attention to grand-viziers, grand-*mufti*s, chief-judges, grand-admirals, treasurers, eunuchs and gate keepers who were involved in this art.

The increasing popularity of calligraphy among the Ottoman elite in the early eighteenth century will be analyzed in relation to the rise of bureaucratization, in other words, the exchange of power between men of the sword (*sāhib-i seyf*) and men of the pen (*sāhib-i kalem*). I will examine the textual organization and location of Ahmed III's calligraphic works, panels and, in particular, monumental inscriptions, in order to provide a better image of the Sultan's artistic agenda.

Chapter III discusses Ahmed III's favourite format, the calligraphic panel, and its utmost priority. I will discuss the transference of religious clichés, namely *Quranic* verses and *hadith*s, from manuscripts and calligraphic albums to larger and portable calligraphic panels. Copies and/or reproductions of his calligraphic panels will be mentioned if necessary but not included in the main debate. In addition, I will outline the innovations in the textual organization of calligraphic panels and the use of *jalī* (enlarged) scripts. The differences between design and composition of the *jalī* scripts before and after Ahmed III will be discussed as well. Furthermore, an examination of the Sultan's monumental inscriptions and their impact on Ottoman palatial epigraphy will take place, as will a survey of the Sultan's monumental inscriptions on chamber entrances at the Topkapı Palace, dervish lodges and public square fountains of the capital. Chapter III will also deal with the application of Ahmed III's calligraphy on Tekfursaray tiles.

In Chapter IV, I will examine the two calligraphic albums compiled by Ahmed III and survey the four *Qur'an* manuscripts he transcribed. I will point out sources of

influence that shaped the art of the Sultan, primarily Timurid and Safavid calligraphic albums in the Topkapı Palace. I will demonstrate Ahmed III's resemblance to the Timurid calligrapher Prince, Baysunghur (1397-1433), and their commonalities in approach to establishing themselves in history through their artistic patronage.

Chapter V deals with the employment of the *Tughra*, the royal signature or stately monogram, as an individual calligraphic format. I will discuss the Sultan's contribution in converting the *Tughra* into a coat of arms, a blazon, uncovering and making use of its heraldic potentials. Moreover, as part of the argument, his purpose of composing pious clichés in the *Tughra* format will be explained. I will consider the *Hadith-tughra* of the Sultan, for instance, as an attempt to unify "religion" and "state" in a single calligraphic composition. Among his innovative *Tughra*-shaped compositions, particular attention will be paid to two bearing the titles of Prophet Muhammad. I will examine these as a sub-group, as the *Tughra*s composed in the name of the Prophet. This innovation will be interpreted as the beginning of the transformation of the Ottoman royal monogram into a logo of prophecy, representing the Ottomanization of *Sunnī* Islam through calligraphy. Chapter VI surveys the Sultan's innovative signatures. These will be examined under three groups; "pear-shaped", "*Tughra*-shaped" and "couplet" signatures. The innovative idea of signing *Tughra* panels, in other words signing signatures, will be brought to light.

I will demonstrate the increased importance of calligraphy in the court of Ahmed III and its relation to the economic and political decline of the Ottoman state. With detailed discussions I aim to enrich the existing, but rather incomplete, portrait of the Sultan and outline the propagandistic nature of his art. It is my intention that this study will help to provide a better and more complete understanding of Ahmed III and stimulate more academic research in this field.

Sources

Calligraphic Works

The core materials of this research have been Sultan Ahmed III's signed calligraphic works in different formats, including calligraphic panels, albums and monumental

inscriptions. Many of the Sultan's calligraphic panels have been found in mosques and mausoleums of İstanbul, in situ, to which these works were presented either by Ahmed III himself or his successors. In addition, extensive research has been carried out in museums and private collections. Thanks to museum accounts, we know where these calligraphic panels were originally located. The richest collection of the Sultan's calligraphic panels is in the Topkapı Palace, where a group of panels are still on display in the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet and the Imperial Council Hall.

There are two calligraphic albums by Ahmed III in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library, the Imperial *Tughra* Album (TSMK A.3653) and the *Muhaqqaq-thuluth* Album (TSM A.3652), endowed by the Sultan himself. These albums help us draw a complete image of the Sultan's mastery in both classical compositions and innovative applications.

The Sultan's signed monumental inscriptions also played a crucial role as research material. Among these, inscriptions located above the entrances of chambers and halls in the Topkapı Palace are the best examples of the message-giving aspect of his art, addressing the everyday visiting elite and members of the palace. In addition, two individual foundation inscriptions signed by Ahmed III are worthy of mention; they were brought to the palace following the collapse of the buildings to which they had originally been attached. Inscriptions on the two public square fountains built by Ahmed III, in front of the main gate of the Topkapı Palace and in the Üsküdar district, must be included.

The Sultan's calligraphic works have been applied on different media. Polychrome tiles produced in the Tekfursaray kilns in this period bear calligraphic compositions of the Sultan. Among these are two tiles in the Nevşehir Museum and the Dāmād İbrahim Paşa Mosque in Nevşehir, bearing the Sultan's *Hadith-tughra*. Apart from these, the *waqf*-seal of the Library of Ahmed III, also designed by him, is attention-worthy. Lastly, decree confirmations of Ahmed III found on *firman*s indicate the artistic value of his everyday script.

Chronicles, Archive Documents and Poetry

Alongside Ahmed III's calligraphic works, there are accounts by the court chroniclers Rāşid Efendi and Çelebi Asim Efendi that provide information about the importance of calligraphy in the daily life of the court. Anecdotes recorded by these chroniclers provide an enriched image of the Sultan and his approach to calligraphy. Additionally, compositions of court poets, particularly by Seyyid Vehbī Efendi and Nedīm Efendi, indicate a new *genre* in courtly literature praising the calligraphic works of the Sultan.

Chronicles by the court historians Rāşid Efendi and Asım Efendi played a crucial role in the formation of the historical background of this study. Rāşid Efendi's accounts, referring to both leading calligraphers and those which were less known, enriched the depiction of Ahmed III's calligraphy salon. Asım Efendi's accounts of the second half of Ahmed III's reign include the short period between 1722 and 1730 but provide a wealth of information on the role of calligraphy in Ahmed III's court. The *Nusret-nāme* (Book of Victories) of Silahdār Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa is a remarkable resource, emphasizing a vital aspect of the Sultan which deeply influenced his calligraphic agenda: Ahmed III's desire for self-legitimization. Anecdotes on the Sultan's personal interests and private life provided by Silahdār Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa have been used to provide a better image of Ahmed III's inconsistent nature and delicate character.

Destārī Sālih Efendi, an eye-witness of the period, provides in his *Destārī Sālih Tārihi* colourful observations on Ahmed III's personality, his affection towards his Grand-Vizier İbrahim Paşa and his sincere interest in art and architecture. Hāfız Hüseyin Ayvansarāyī 's *Hadī katü'l Cevāmi'* (Garden of Mosques), a history of the mosques of İstanbul, has been used to providing relevant data for determining the location of calligraphic panels of Ahmed III.

Primary resources in Turkish on the history of Ottoman calligraphy, including calligraphers' biographies, are lacking in that they do not provide full portraits of calligrapher sultans. These accounts provide mostly rather limited information on the lives of master calligraphers, and are sweetened with witty anecdotes that can rarely satisfy any academic interest. Among those, Müstakimzāde Süleyman Saadeddīn Efendi's (d.1788) *Tuḥfe-i Hattātīn* provides calligrapher biographies from the

seventh century until 1787, largely dedicated to Ottoman calligraphers. Müstakim-zāde's detailed anecdotes on leading calligraphers of the early eighteenth century help draw a detailed picture of the calligraphy salon of Ahmed III.

The *Tezkire*[2] (Official Message) of Kilārī Ahmed Refī', dated 1131AH/1718AD, includes valuable records on poets, calligraphers and musicians employed in the Imperial School in the Topkapı Palace. Court calligraphers in the service of Ahmed III who have not been mentioned in Müstakimzāde's *Tuḥfe-i Hattātīn* appear in this work.

During my research in the Ottoman State Archives in İstanbul, documents relating to calligrapher Ottoman sultans and their works were found. Among these, a mid-nineteenth century report[3], including detailed lists of calligrapher Ottoman sultans' works and their locations, became a starting point for searching and locating Ahmed III's calligraphic works. It is note-worthy that during my field research, several calligraphic panels composed by Ahmed III were found which were not listed in this document.

The primary literary resource for my research was the *Dīwān*[4] (collected poems) of Sultan Ahmed III. This work introduces a completely different aspect of the Sultan to the reader. The *Dīwān* includes poems with direct references to Ahmed III's calligraphic works, which, in some cases, have even been transformed into calligraphy. It is through this *Dīwān* and the poems which have then been employed on his calligraphic works that we are able to attribute the panels to the Sultan himself. Court calligrapher Mehmed Rāsim Efendi's *Dīwān*[5], in the Yapı Kredi - Sermet Çifter Manuscript Library, İstanbul, includes chronograms composed for calligraphic works of the Sultan, while the *Dīwān*[6] of the court chronicler Rāşid Efendi, whose accounts were mentioned above, also includes poems written in praise of the calligrapher Sultan's works.

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[2] The text of this manuscript (AMK, Inv. No. 1479) has been transliterated and published by Rıfkı Melül Meriç See Meriç, (1956), pp.139-146.
[3] OADB, D.06224.0001.00
[4] *Dīwān*, Millet Library Istanbul, Ali Emīrī Section: Manzum 529.
[5] *Dīwān* (Author's copy), Yapi Kredi - Sermet Çifter Manuscript Library, Yazma:428, 1169A.H./1755A.D.
[6] The Manuscript Library of the Istanbul Research Institute, The Şevket Rado Collection, No:22

The *Mecmū'a-i Tevārih* by Hāfız Hüseyin Ayvansarāyī , a rich collection of chronograms, provides chronograms praising Ahmed III's mastery in calligraphy and archery. The *Dī wān* of Nedī m, the court poet, including many odes in praise of Ahmed III and İbrahim Paşa, draws a delightful picture of the cultural and artistic life of the period. If not as rich as Nedīm, the *Dīwān*s of the poets Sāmī and Seyyid Vehbī also include detailed depictions of courtly gatherings. Nedīm, Sāmī and Seyyid Vehbī's eulogies and chronograms in praise of Ahmed III's Imperial Album and *Hadith-tughra* panel have been referred to in the relevant sections below.

Studies

Apart from a handful of publications focusing on the arts, the reign of Ahmed III, and the Tulip Period in particular, have been identified as a period of social and cultural opening, which is to say that there was an increased interest in foreign countries, in Europe in particular, and a less orthodox reaction to innovations. Ahmet Refik Altınay's *Fatma Sultan*, a historical biography of Ahmed III's beloved daughter, draws attention to female patrons of calligraphy. Lavender Cassels' *The Struggle for the Ottoman Empire (1717-1740)* is a more detailed study with a particular approach, emphasizing the personal weaknesses of Ahmed III and his artistic nature. *Batı'ya Açılan Pencere – Lale Devri* (A Window Opening to the West – The Tulip Period), by Süphan Andıç and Fuat Andıç, is a thematic introduction to the political, social and cultural background of the second half of Ahmed III's reign. The most recent, cogent illustration of the Tulip Period is Shirine Hamadeh's *The City's Pleasures – İstanbul in the Eighteenth Century*. During the course of my research, insightful remarks by A. Süheyl Ünver, Gül İrepoğlu, Madeline C. Zilfi, Robert Olson on various aspects of Ahmed III's patronage and art have also been determined to be of great value and are necessary to establish a full understanding of Ahmed III and his reign.

Turgut Saner's remarks on the introduction of decorative elements from Mughal India to the eighteenth century Ottoman decorative repertoire drew my attention to the possibility of similar influences on calligraphy. Drawing a detailed picture of Ahmed III as a patron of the arts, Can Erimtan's article, "The Case of Saadabad: Westernization or Revivalism", is not only a survey on the characteristic features of

the Sa'd-ābād Palace but a discussion on the change in media on which calligraphy was employed.

Gülçin Canca's unpublished PhD thesis, *Bir Geçiş Dönemi Olarak İstanbul'da III Ahmed Devri Mimarisi* (The Architecture in Ahmed III's İstanbul as a Period of Transition) provides a technical approach to the architectural program of the period, including discussions on innovations in epigraphy, but does not give a full list of monumental inscriptions produced under Ahmed III. This gap in Canca's work has been filled by *Aç Besmeleyle İç Suyu Hān Ahmed'e Eyle Duā* (Open the Tap, Drink Water, Pray for Ahmed Hān)[7], written by Hatice Aynur and Hakan Karateke. In this book epigraphic inscriptions of all surviving fountains built under Ahmed III have been gathered and, moreover, their calligraphic styles have been determined.

İsmail Erünsal's article, "Osmanlılarda Kütüphane ve Kütüphanecilik Geleneği" (Library and its Tradition under the Ottomans) is a detailed introduction to the history of Ottoman libraries, providing detailed information on those founded in the early eighteenth century. Şükrü Yenal's article on the Library of Ahmed III is the only publication in which Ahmed III's calligraphic dedication panel for his library has been discussed. Jale Baysal studied the open cultural atmosphere of early eighteenth century İstanbul and its relation to the increasing interest in libraries and manuscript production. It was Müjgan Cumbur, however, who discussed libraries founded under Ahmed III as a whole and drew attention to the increasing importance of calligraphy in this period.

Franz Babinger's *Müteferrika ve Osmanlı Matbaası* (Müteferrika and the Ottoman Printing Press) is the leading resource on the foundation of the first Muslim press in İstanbul, which took place during the reign of Ahmed III. Articles by Fikret Sarıcaoğlu, Erhan Afyoncu, Edward Carleson, Niyazi Berkes, Orlin Sabev, Adil Şen, Selīm Nüzhet Gerçek, Turgut Kut, Kemal Beydilli and Coşkun Yılmaz argue the significance of the foundation of the Müteferrika Press and discuss calligraphers' reaction to it.[8] İsmet Binark argued calligraphers' roles in the delay of the arrival of the printing press. Binark has made an attempt to impose a common theme of

[7] This is the chronogram of the public square fountain built by Ahmed III in front of the Topkapı Palace.
[8] The relevant articles of these authors are listed in the bibliography.

discussion on the unquestionable and determining nature of İstanbul's elite's calligraphic taste, as established by calligrapher sultans.

Gülnur Duran's *Ali Üsküdārī – Tezhip ve Rugānī Üstadı Çiçek Ressamı* (Ali Üsküdārī - Flower Illustrator, Illuminator and Master of Lacquer) is the first study on the works of Ali Üsküdarī, Ahmed III's court illuminator and lacquer master. The illustrations of Ali Üsküdārī 's works published in this thesis provide evidence of a common decorative programme used in the arts of the book during this period. More importantly, the Sultan's *Thuluth-Muhaqqaq* Album has partly been published in Duran's book. However, Duran, focusing on the decoration of the album, provides no discussion of its calligraphic value.

Ali Alparslan, in his *Osmanlı Hat Sanatı Tarihi* (History of Ottoman Calligraphy), presents a detailed survey of the history of Ottoman calligraphy with emphasis on biographical data. Ali Aparslan also provides a list of Sultan Ahmed III's calligraphic works but it is incomplete. Few and very limited amounts have been written on these particular works and there has been little engagement with the literature on comparative calligraphic styles and projects carried out in the royal scriptorium during his reign. The focus given to the studies of master calligraphers such as Şeyh Hamdullah and Hāfız Osman Efendi has prevented the development of more nuanced analyses on calligrapher sultans.

Books written on the life and works of Hāfız Osman Efendi drew my attention to the influence he had on his pupil, Ahmed III. Ömer Faruk Dere's *Hat Sanatında Hāfız Osman Efendi ve Ekolü* (Hāfız Osman Efendi and His School in the Art of Calligraphy) is the most recent and cogent survey on the master whose art immensely influenced Ahmed III.

Publications on the status held by calligraphic albums within the realm of the art of the book were relevant to my research, especially with regard to the two calligraphic albums compiled by Ahmed III. These albums have been analyzed in light of articles written by Francesca von Habsburg, Annemarie Schimmel, and Marie L. Swietochowski. David J. Roxburgh's *The Persian Album* is an unsurpassed resource in this field and his approach to the methods of organization and aesthetic features of albums had a determining impact on my approach to studying the albums of Ahmed III. M. Uğur Derman's recently published book, *Murakka'-ı Hās*, on the Imperial

Album of Ahmed III is an introduction to the art of the Sultan lacking scholarly argument on the innovative formats and contents of the Sultan's *Tughra-style* compositions. Little has been written on the *Tughra*, the Ottoman imperial monogram, which played a crucial role in Ahmed III's art. Miralay Ali Bey's introductive article "Tuğra-i Hümāyūn" provides scholarly discussion on the structural peculiarities and technicalities of the Ottoman *Tughra*. C.E. Bosworth, J. Deny and Muhammad Yūsuf Siddiq's article "*Tughra*" is one of the best introductions on its historical background and formation Almost nothing has been written on the evolution of calligraphers' signatures, a subject that has been tackled in this study by analyzing Ahmed III's innovative signatures. Vahe Berkin's introductory article, "Osmanlı Hattatlarının Imzaları: Ketebeler" (Signatures of Ottoman Calligraphers: *Ketebe*s) is the only publication on this subject.

Among the above-mentioned publications, few refer directly to Sultan Ahmed III's calligraphic works. The author enjoys the privilege of adding new ground to the extended literature.

Methodology

The methodology utilised in this study is based on revealing the factors that distinguish Ahmed III from conventional sultans and ordinary calligraphers. Emphasizing his identity as a sultan plays an essential role in determining the originality of his art. To provide a better understanding of this, the circumstances and sources of inspiration which created the 'calligrapher sultan' will be investigated. In order to contextualize Ahmed III as a calligrapher within the time period in which he lived, an art-historical approach, with particular emphasis on the increasing significance of calligraphy, will be used to supplement the image of the Tulip period in the existing scholarship as this body has thus far neglected the role and increasing importance of calligraphy for the upper class.

Having visited every available museum and private collection holding works by Ahmed III that I am aware of, I aim to provide a comprehensive, if not complete, list of the Sultan's calligraphic works. Dated works have been crucial in terms of establishing a chronological approach to the Sultan's artistic agenda; unfortunately,

only 9 out of his 39 signed calligraphic works are dated. For this reason, it has proven extremely difficult to conduct a chronological analysis of these works.

One could argue that undated monumental inscriptions appearing on buildings both commissioned and restored by the Sultan could be dated to the year of their construction or restoration. However, the Sultan executed similar calligraphic compositions, on different media, at different times in his career. Textually and technically there is no sequence of style in his dated calligraphic works and for this reason a chronological order could not be established. For instance, the two *Tughra*-style compositions located on either side of the entrance to the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet in the Topkapı Palace could have been placed in situ anytime following the renovation of the Hall's façade. These two *tughra*-style compositions are also found in the Sultan's Imperial *Tughra* Album, dated 1727, which was produced more than a decade after the renovation of the Hall. In this instance, it is impossible to know whether the two *tughra*-shaped compositions at the entrance of the Hall were located in situ before or after the production of the Imperial *Tughra* Album. Considering possible gaps between the executions of similar calligraphic compositions on different media, I do not believe that establishing a certain chronology is possible for the undated monumental inscriptions.

However, establishing a relatively healthier chronology seems to be possible for Ahmed III's calligraphic panels. Take, for example, a dated calligraphic panel written in soot ink. One can be certain that all its copies done in gold overlay were produced after the ink-written original. This is because all the gold overlaid panels were copied from the original in soot ink. This dating system can be considered credible unless a second, ink-written original exhibiting an earlier date can be found.

Considering the development of the Sultan's calligraphic skills, particularly in creating *thuluth* compositions and designing *tughra*s, dating by analogy could be possible. However, amateurish and inefficient restorations carried out in the 1990s have spoiled the crystalline finish necessary for this undertaking to be conclusive. Many of the Sultan's calligraphic panels have been restored inexpertly and a few, such as the *al-najāt fi al-sidq* panel (TVHSM 2125), have been disgracefully over-painted.

Although his calligraphic panels, albums, *Qur'an* manuscripts and monumental inscriptions offer a considerable amount of information, the stylistic development and textual background of these works will be discussed in detail. The innovative calligraphic formats invented by Ahmed III, particularly the *tughra*-shaped compositions and pear-shaped signatures, will not be examined only as new techniques. The propagandistic nature of these innovative applications will also form a central part of this discussion.

The textual organization of the calligraphic works will be studied from different angles. Firstly, the calligraphic works will be classified according to the language of the texts: Arabic, Persian or Turkish. Possible reasons for the employment of a certain language will be discussed within the context of these works. Secondly, the literary backgrounds of the texts will be examined. Religious texts including *Quranic* verses and *hadith*s of the Prophet will be analyzed separately from the poetic texts. Thirdly, the message-giving nature of the works will be investigated according to their texts, formats and location. Expanded and detailed analyses of the textual organization of the Sultan's calligraphic works will provide a better understanding of his departure from the classical textual repertoire of Ottoman calligraphy.

Moreover, Ahmed III's real status in the history of Ottoman calligraphy will be outlined by emphasizing his innovative approach. I question the aim of the Sultan in employing the *tughra* at the heart of his calligraphic repertoire. Uğur Derman's *Ahmed III: Sultan and Affixer of the Tughra* was the starting point for my research on this point. Further research was conducted by examining the Sultan's *Tughra*-style compositions in the Imperial *Tughra* Album, and analyzing their texts.

Through researching his calligraphic works, I aim to provide an overview of Ahmed III's primary concern in producing calligraphy as royal gifts. Having listed the locations of the calligraphic panels in situ, many in mosques and mausoleums, I will determine the artistic and technical differences between works located in public spaces and those located in the Topkapı Palace. The Sultan's calligraphic panels and monumental inscriptions will be studied separately. This will serve to provide a better understanding of the employment of different textual organizations and techniques in different formats.

The monumental inscriptions located on the gates of the Topkapı Palace will be examined as a group. Since these are the earliest monumental inscriptions in the Topkapı Palace designed by an Ottoman sultan, their significance and impact on the future epigraphic programme of the palace will be discussed individually.

The two calligraphic albums Ahmed III endowed to the Imperial Library will be studied separately due to their entirely different textual content and technical features. The Imperial *Tughra* Album (TSMK A.3653) will receive more attention than the classically organized *Muhaqqaq-Thuluth* Album (TSMK A.3652) because of its ground breaking nature; this is the first time an album consisting solely of *Tughra*s was created and as such, this was an invention of Ahmed III.

CHAPTER ONE:

The Reign of Ahmed III and Visual Arts of the Period:

An Outline

Şehinşâh-ı zemān Sultan Ahmed Hān-i Gāzi kim

Aristūlar kalır dem-beste rüşd-i bī-kiyāsında[9]

Vāk'a-nüvis Rāşid Efendi

(The ruler of the day, Sultan Ahmed *Hān*, the warrior,

Who remains Aristotle breathless in the presence of his incomprehensible virtue)

(Rāşid Efendi, the Court Chronicler)

[9] Raşid, (1875), p.12

Chapter I: The Reign of Ahmed III and Arts of the Period: An Outline

I.1 A Portrait of Sultan Ahmed III (1673-1736)

The twenty-third sultan of the Ottoman dynasty, Ahmed III, was born in 30 December 1673 (22 Ramadan 1084 AH).[10] Prince Ahmed, Sultan Mehmed IV and Sultana Rabia Gülnuş's son, grew up in the Edirne Palace. His schooling, however, began during one of the sporadic visits of the court to İstanbul, following a courtly ceremony called *bad-i basmala.*[11] This ceremony took place in the Istavroz Palace, on 9 August 1679.[12] He was brought up in the Imperial Harem in Edirne with a traditional princely education, studying the *Qur'an*, the *hadiths* (traditions of Prophet Muhammad), and the fundamentals of Islamic sciences, history, poetry and music under the supervision of private tutors.

Ahmed III appears to have been of a curious and intellectual nature, spending most of his time reading and practising calligraphy.[13] The well-constructed literary manner of his poems manifests his profound knowledge of poetry, history, Islamic theology and philosophy, while his dedicated interest in calligraphy is closely related to his princely education as he was expected to master one of the courtly arts. He therefore practiced calligraphy, in all probability because of the influence of his elder brother, the future Mustafa II, who also became a notable calligrapher.[14] Prince Ahmed studied calligraphy with leading court calligraphers, primarily with Hāfiz Osman Efendi (d.1698) who influenced his art immensely.

During his princehood, Ahmed surrounded himself with capable individuals who would one day be a part of his royal court. For instance, in Edirne, he made friends with a bright officer-scribe, İbrahim, from the city of Nevşehir, who was to become one of the outstanding grand-viziers of his future reign. From 1687 he lived in

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[10] *Ahmed-i Thālith* (احمد ثالث), meaning Ahmed III in Ottoman, is the chronogram to his birth. In other words, the sum of its letters is equal to the year he was born, 1084 AH. [Ayvansarāyī , (1978), p.6]

[11] *Bad-i basmala* is an Ottoman term indicating a traditional ceremony which was performed for children just before their first day at school. For further information see; Mustafa Öcal, 'Amin Alay *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Islam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol:III, Istanbul, (1991), p.63

[12] Sakaoğlu, (1999), p.315

[13] Raşid, V (1865), p.380

[14] Sakaoğlu, (1999), p.303

isolation for 16 years in the Edirne and İstanbul palaces.[15] The reigns of his uncles Süleyman II (r.1687-1691) and Ahmed II (r.1691-1695) were followed by the short reign of his elder brother Mustafa II (r.1695-1703), during which period he dedicated himself to calligraphy and intellectual activities. These peaceful years came to an end with the unexpected uprising of the janissaries in Edirne in 1703, when his brother Mustafa II was dethroned on 23 August 1703, and he became Sultan Ahmed III. Sultan Mustafa's dethronement appears to have been related primarily to his efforts to re-create the traditional 'warrior-ruler' image, which caused disastrous results.[16]

The new ruler, on the other hand, was truly a man of the pen (*ṣāhib al-qalam*) and not a man of the sword (*ṣāhib al-sayf*). Having no taste for war, Ahmed III discouraged war-mongering; he managed to achieve peace by the middle of his 27 year reign. Since he was exceedingly fond of money, this policy can also be related to the savings of the expenses that war entailed.

Ahmed III's true character came to the fore in the second half of his reign, named as the Tulip Era by the 20th century Turkish poet Yahya Kemal Beyatlı.[17] Under the Sultan's generous patronage, this period marked the earliest occurrences of Europeanization in the Ottoman capital, especially in terms of urban planning and public space.[18] Contrary to his pious image, the Sultan was interested in adorning his capital, building mansions, commissioning gardens, as well as attending garden parties and entertainments. He enjoyed two types of gatherings the most, *halwa*-parties organized in upper-class mansions in the fall or winter, and *çırāğān*-parties in the imperial gardens in the spring and summer. These regular garden visits were based on his and his grand-vizier İbrahim Paşa's, common passion for flowers, particularly tulips.[19] Ahmed III's interest in outdoor entertainments transformed the lifestyle of the upper classes. The Sultan, in perfect harmony with İbrahim Paşa, was

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[15] The permanent role of calligraphy in the cultural atmosphere of Edirne shaped Prince Ahmed's interest in the arts of the book and drew his attention to calligraphy. For further information on the role of Edirne in Ottoman calligraphy see Derman, (1965), pp.311-319. Also see Onur, (1955).
[16] Findley, (2006), p.67
[17] Yahya Kemal Beyatlı (d.1958) named this period and used the term Tulip Era (Lale Devri) for the first time in his poems, published in the *Yeni Mecmua* in March 1918. See Yücebaş, (1955), p.116.
[18] For an introduction to the Tulip Era see Altınay (1973), İrepoğlu (1999), p.15-24.
[19] Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi has written a book introducing the crucial role of tulip in the second half of Ahmed III's reign. See; Ayverdi, (1950), pp.5-15.

the leading figure of a new era in which the Ottoman elite began to spend more time in their new mansions and pavilions within the city, as well as their water-side residences (*sāhil-saray*) on the shores of the Bosphorus, and less within the confines of the Topkapı Palace.[20] Ahmed III, accompanied by his vizier and companion İbrahim Paşa, attended lavish gatherings, enjoying the pleasures of garden parties and evening concerts.

Confident of Ahmed III's trust and support, İbrahim Paşa turned the empire's face definitively towards Europe. This trend of Westernization, thoroughly approved of by Ahmed III, created an increasing interest in the artistic, cultural and social aspects of Europe, particularly of France, among the Ottoman elite. As stated by Stanford Shaw, "İbrahim Paşa was the first grand-vizier who sincerely believed in the necessity of knowledge on Europe".[21]

Marrying the beloved daughter of Ahmed III, Fatma Sultan, İbrahim Paşa became the Sultan's son-in-law.[22] Among the Sultan's gifts to him was a precious diamond, valued at twenty-five thousand *gurūş*.[23] This was an extravagant gift, especially during this period of economic weakness, when silver goods of the Topkapı Palace were often melted down to mint coins; however, the Sultan continued to regularly present luxurious gifts to İbrahim Paşa.[24] Ahmed III even used to visit İbrahim Paşa when he suffered from ill health,[25] although a sultan making bedside visits to one his subjects was unheard of before this. Furthermore, he wrote poems in his *Dīwān* in praise of İbrahim Paşa, something else which was out of the ordinary at this time.[26] These acts all indicate that the relationship between Ahmed III and İbrahim Paşa

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[20] Raşid, VI (1865), p.53
[21] Shaw, (1976), p.233. [Also see; Kuban, (2007), p.506]
[22] Altınay, (undated), p.5
[23] Raşid, VI (1865), p.374
[24] Raşid, IV (1865), p.381 Çağatay Uluçay has published three papers listing the royal gifts presented to Sultan Ahmed III and fortunes spent for the festivals before and during the wedding ceremony of his daughter Fatma Sultan [See; Uluçay, (1958), pp.137-138, 138-148, 149-152].
[25] Raşid, IV, (1865), p.349
[26] Ahmed III praised Ibrahim Paşa as follows; "*Çerāğānımsın benim hem sen vezīr-i nüktedānımsın – Nazīrin yok sadākat ile meşhūr-i cihānımsın*" (You are my light, you are my witty vizier – You are world-famous for your loyalty) [*Dīwān*, p.34] "*Āsafā māh-i nevi Hak sana mes'ūd etsin – Zāt-ı bi-mislini sadrında ferāh-sūd etsin – Başı ersin feleğe sana hevādār olanın – Kibriyā düşmen ü bed-hāhını merdūd etsin*" (Oh Vizier! May God make this new month prosperous for you – May your unequalled personality reign on vizierate in relief – May your follower be exalted – May the almighty reject your enemy and opponent) [*Dīwān*, p.47] "*Bir an dūr etmesin Allah seni sadr ü vezāretden – Vücūdun hıfz ede Bāri bi-hakk-ı Kābe-i ulyā*" (May God not separate you from the Office of vizierate – May God preserve your being for the sake of the Holy Qa'ba) [*Dīwān*, p.11]

went far beyond official and administrative concerns, and that they had a deep and sincere affection for each other.

The Sultan was truly attached to his family and took great interest in the concerns of the Harem as well. He had no less than thirty-one children and his reign was consequently distinguished by frequent festivities to celebrate the circumcisions of his sons and the marriages of his daughters. Among his fourteen sons, his favourite must have been Prince Mehmed the elder, who emulated him and practised calligraphy professionally.[27] As for his daughters, his affection towards Fatma Sultan is well documented.[28]

Although regarded as a pleasure-loving sultan by most modern historians, in reality, like the majority of the Ottoman sultans, Ahmed III exhibited an extremely pious and God-fearing nature. His piety and dedication can best be observed in his poems and in the organization of the texts of his calligraphic works. His practice of presenting his calligraphic panels to mosques and mausoleums is also indicative of this. Moreover, he had faith in the spiritual aid given by the prayers of *sufi* sheikhs and in the divine aid of *sufi* rituals. Whenever a prince suffered from ill health, these rituals were performed in dervish-lodges on Ahmed III's order, to aid in the prince's recovery.[29] He also believed that in times of trouble forty *Sūrat al-Yāsin*s, recited by forty pious men named Muhammad, would provide spiritual benefits.[30]

Due to his title of 'caliph', Ahmed III was considered the supreme representative of the *Sunnī* faith and had fundamental relations with leading *sufi* orders. However, this was not related to his religious inclinations. *Sufi* sects have always had a vital role in shaping the Ottoman political and cultural agenda.[31] Almost all Ottoman sultans had close relationships with at least one *sufi* leader, whom they frequently

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[27] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.384
[28] In his book, *Fatma Sultan*, 20th century historian Refik Ahmed Sevengil has provided detailed accounts on the relationship between Ahmed III and Fatma Sultan.
[29] Raşid, VI (1865), p.30
[30] Destārī , (1962), p.14
[31] 'Sufi orders formed an individual class as an alternative to the *'ilmiye* (scholars) sect supported by the state. Sufi orders were the equivalents of today's civil social organizations'. [Erol Özbilgen, *Bütün Yönleriyle Osmanlı -Âdâb-ı Osmâniyye-*, Iz, Istanbul, 2004, p.541]

consulted on religious and spiritual matters.[32] Ahmed III was fond of the *cerrāhiye sufi* order,[33] and built a dervish-lodge for Şeyh Nūreddin Cerrāhī (d.1721), the founder of the order, in 1703, just after his enthronement. He also honoured Nūreddin Cerrāhī by bestowing on him one of the four *Qur'an* manuscripts which he himself had copied.[34]

Ahmed III desired to model himself on his namesake Ahmed I's pious image. He used the same golden axe, which had been used by Ahmed I to lay the foundation stone of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque in 1609, for laying the foundation stone of his library in the Topkapı Palace in 1719.[35] He restored and redecorated the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet in the Topkapı Palace, just like his great-grand father, as well as having a common interest in calligraphy. Ahmed III interest in inscribing *hadith*s on calligraphic panel also reminds Ahmed I's interest in hadiths who had also copied *hadith*s, even though he did not practise calligraphy in general.[36]

Ahmed III's interest in the study of *hadith* is also manifested by the calligraphic panel he placed in the eastern corner of his library in the Topkapı Palace. The sultan personally inscribed one of his own poems in the panel, which states his purpose:

"I bear witness that there is no God but God

I created this corner to receive blessing (*li marzati'llâh*).

I hope to gain prophetic intercession

in the continued reading of *tefāsir* and *hadith*."

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[32] 'The Sultans's sheikh had direct influence on stately matters. This sheikh was regarded as the Sultan's spiritual leader and adviser.' [Halil İnalcık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu – Klasik Çağ (1300-1600)*, Istanbul, YKY, 2003, p.104]

[33] Cerrāhiyye, an inner sect of the *Khalwatiyya* order, was founded by Sheikh Nūreddin Cerrāhī, encouraged by Sheikh Ali Ala'üddīn Efendi of the Selāmī Dervish-lodge, in Üsküdar, Istanbul. [For further detail see; Ahmet Güner, *Tarikatlar Ansiklopedisi*, 1991, Istanbul, p.105]

[34] Müstakimzade, (1928), p.78

[35] Rāşid V, (1865), pp.128-129. Sakaoğlu (2003), p. 204.

[36] The *Ahmed I Album* (TSMK, B.408), produced in the imperial *nakkaşhāne* (court workshops), includes a lavishly illuminated opening page bearing *hadith*s of the Prophet, which bears a colophon signed by Ahmed I (TSMK, B.408, 5b); *ketebehu Sultân Ahmed Hān imām al-Müslimīn* (Sultan Ahmed Khān, leader of Muslims, wrote it). He also wrote three *hadith*s in *naskh* script, on the margin of fol. 4a in a fifteenth century album in the Topkapı Palace Library (TSM H.2160).

This panel in *jali thuluth* script[37] clearly informs the reader of the function of this corner of the library and declares the sultan's support of the study of *hadith* ('*ilm-i hadith*).[38] The Sultan regularly attended scholarly meetings in his library and enjoyed listening to sholars' discussions on Qur'an commentaries and *hadith* two days a week.[39]

As a sign of his piety and loyalty to the Prophet, Ahmet III's interest in the *hadith* is manifested in various ways besides playing an important role in the textual repertoire of his calligraphic works.[40] Many collections and translations of *hadith*s (*hadis mecmûaları*) were compiled in manuscript form and dedicated to him during his reign.[41] When the *hadith* scholar İsmail al-Aclūnī (d.1748), the author of *Keşfü'l*

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[37] This panel is in *zerendud* technique, in which the text is created by using a pounce.

[38] The poem on the calligraphic panel reads:

"*Eşhedüen lâilâhe illallâh*

Yapdım bu makâmı li marzati'llâh

Okunduk *ça tefâsîr ü ehâdî*

Şefâatdir ümmîdim Yâ Resûlallâh".

Şükrü Yenal attracted attention to this panel in his article on the Library of Ahmed III. See Yenal, Şükrü. "Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Enderun Kitaplığı", *Güzel Sanatlar*, Vol: VI, Istanbul, 1949, pp. 85-90., p. 88

[39] Raşid, V (1865), p. 381

[40] In his calligraphic agenda the Sultan employed the following four *hadith*s: *Re'sü'l hikmeti mehāfetullâh* (Fearing God is the beginning of wisdom), *El cennetu tahtu'l akdāmu'l ummehā* (Paradise is under the feet of mothers), *En necâtü fi's sıdk* (Salvation comes with loyalty) and *Şefāatī li ehl-i'l kebāiri min ümmetī* (My intercession is for those who commit greater sins in my community). He composed and placed these *hadith*s in the Topkapı Palace and the most-often visited sacred sites of the capital, namely in mosques and mausoleums, creating a God-fearing image in the eyes of visitors. These *hadith*s were carefully selected, fundamental religious clichés of Islam, with which Ahmed clearly wanted to be associated. In retrospect, the image Ahmed III projected through these calligraphic compositions was rather pathetic, since he, who aimed to reflect Islamic virtues through his panels, was ultimately unable to protect the lands of Islam. Perhaps emphasizing the virtues of Islamic faith through his calligraphy was the only alternative he had remaining to him. Following Ahmed III, many calligrapher sultans including Mustafa III, Selim III, Mahmud II, Abdülmecid strengthened their pious image through their calligraphic works.

[41] Among these works, *Ahsenü'l Haber* written by Abdullah b. Mehmed was presented to Ahmed III following his enthronement in 1703. Other works on *hadith,* such as the translation of forty *hadiths* by Hikmetî and Osmanzâde Tâib Efendi's *Sıhhat-ābād*, were also dedicated to the Sultan. See; Özafşar,

Hafā, came to İstanbul in 1707, he visited Ahmed III and was appointed chief-tutor to the Great Mosque of Damascus by the Sultan, where he lectured for forty years.[42] Another outstanding authority on *hadith* was Yūsuf Efendizāde Abdullah Efendi (d.1754) who dedicated his commentary on Buhârî to Ahmed III.[43]

The particular *hadith* that Ahmed III chose to inscribe in a *tughra*-shaped composition (My intercession is for those who commit greater sins in my community) primarily stresses his desire for the Prophet's intercession.[44] İsmail Hakkı Bursevî (d.1725), the leading sheikh of the *celvetī* sufi order and the spiritual mentor of Ahmed III's father Mehmed IV, might also have been influential in his selection.[45] Bursevî, in his *Kitābü'l Netīce* discusses those who receive intercession and adds: "even sultans envy those saintly people (*selātin ona reşk eyler*)".[46]

In addition, most of the poems in his *Dīwān* indicate a sincere affection for the Prophet. There are poems in praise of Muslim saints, particularly Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, the founder of the *Mevleviye sufi* order, and saints of the Bektāşī sect, the official *sūfi* order of the janissaries.[47] Consequently he was respected by *sūfis* and

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Mehmet Emin. "Osmanlı Eğitim, Kültür ve Sanat Hayatında Hadis", *Türkler*, Vol:11, (2002), pp. 356-369., pp. 356-369

[42] Özafşar (2002), p. 360

[43] Ibid p. 361

[44] The Sultan's emphasis on his interest in the Prophet's intercession can also be observed in the *hadith-tughra* applied on six Tekfursaray tiles, located in the Kara Ağalar Mosque in the Topkapı Palace. This tiled *hadith-tughra* has a unique feature with the use of under-glaze painted blue and red. The letters *'ayn*, *ta* and *ya* in the word *shafāatī* , have been outlined in red. The word *'ati* in red, hidden in the word *shafāatī* , means: "disobedient slave" in Arabic. Located to the heart of *shafāatī* (my intercession), the word *'ati* certainly indicates the Sultan himself and stresses his will to obtain divine grace through the intercession of Prophet Muhammad. See: Bora Keskiner. 'Sultan Ahmed III's Calligraphy on Tekfursaray Tiles', *Proceedings of the 14th International Congress of Turkish Art* (Forthcoming).

[45] See; Namlı, Ali. 'İsmail Hakkı Bursevî', *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol: 23, İstanbul, 2001, pp. 102-106.

[46] Bursevî, İsmail Hakkı. *Kitābü'n-Netīce*, Ed. Ali Namlı – İmdat Yavaş, vol: II, İnsan, Istanbul, 1998., p. 436 Dr. Nedim Tan drew my attention to this source.

[47]It has been noted in his *Dī wān* that, in the year 1127 (1714 A.D.), on his way to Mora, the Sultan visited the Mausoleum of Nefes Baba, a *Bektāşī* saint, composed a poem in praise of Nefes Baba and placed it on the wall of the mausoleum. *Dīwān*, (Millet Manuscript Library: Ali Emī rī , Manzūm, No:529), p.10

even some of the poems from his *Dīwān* were composed as hymns and recited in dervish-lodges.[48]

Similar to his calligraphic works, his poems played an important role in forming an image of the ideal ruler. He had particular interest in composing chronograms for certain occasions. He composed chronograms for the foundation of his two public fountains[49], the opening of his daughter Fatma Sultan's mosque[50] and the restoration of the Dervish-lodge of Tercüman Yunus[51]. His poetic and calligraphic talents were courtly virtues which were proudly praised by the court poets and chroniclers of the period.

The Sultan was also keen and witty in discourse, with an implicit sense of humour that can be observed in some of his poems. One such example is a quatrain in his *Dīwān* in which he celebrates himself! This is seen in the last line, which was a self-referential chronogram for the New Year at the turn of 1729.[52]

Lastly, his interest in shooting and archery is note-worthy. Shooting was among his favourite entertainments; he attended shooting parties and rewarded those skilful at the practice.[53] He practised archery professionally, emulating the legendry sixteenth century calligraphy master Şeyh Hamdullah, who was given the title *Şeyh* for being the *Şeyh* of archers (*Sheikh al-rāmiyīn*).[54] In addition, the practice of archery was traditionally associated with the image of the 'warrior' (*ghāzī*) ruler, and while Ahmed was not fond of war, both the janissaries and the '*ulemā* expected the reigning sultan to exemplify this persona. Ahmed III's own lacquer-decorated bow,

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[48] Öztürk, (2004), p.122 Ali Emīrī Efendi, the copier of the *Dīwān* of Ahmed III, has noted on the margin that his poem, "*Doldur cihānı ey gönül...*" was composed in the musical mode of Kürdī. [See; *Dīwān*, p.51]
[49] *Dīwān*, fol.31b and fol.32a
[50] Çelebizāde, (1865), p. 499. The choronogram reads: "*Fatma Sultan, Allah camiin etsün kabul*". Also see: *Dīwān*, fol.32a
[51] *Dīwān*, fol.32b. Müstakimzade, (1928), p. 79.
[52] The chronogram reads; "*Mes'ūd ola Hān Ahmede bu sāl-i hümāyūn*" (May this exalted year be felicitous to Sultan Ahmed). [See; *Dīwān*, p.65]
[53] Raşid, VI (1865), p.44
[54] Aktepe, (1989), p.38 Professor Muhittin Serin has discussed Sheikh Hamdullah's mastery of archery and the creation of the archery tradition among Ottoman calligraphers. [See; Serin, (2007), pp.47-9]

dated 1701, bearing the inscription "*Ghāzi Sultān Ahmed Hān-ı Sālis*" (Sultan Ahmed III, the Warrior) in *nas-ta'līq* script, supports this statement.[55]

Despite his pious activities, however, Ahmed III's religious leanings were deemed insufficient in the eyes of the orthodox '*ulemā,* who heavily criticized the secular trends of the Sultan and his court. His invitation of foreign painters, the foundation of the first Muslim printing press and the secular lifestyle of the upper classes were continuously condemned by religious authorities.[56] Lastly, the Sultan's interest in creating a reformed unit in the Ottoman army alarmed the janissaries. The culmination of these sentiments was that the Sultan was dethroned following the Patrona Halil revolt, on September 29, 1730. He was succeeded on October 1, 1730 by his nephew Mahmud I (r.1730-1754) and until his death in 1736 he lived what is referred to as a 'caged life'.

I.2 Introduction to the Reign of Ahmed III (1703-1730)

I.2.1 A Short Outline of the Political and Economic Situation

Unlike his forceful predecessors of the sixteenth century, Ahmed III came to power in a period of political and economic instability. This period saw an uneasy transition in which the idealized image of the Ottoman ruler as the "warrior-sultan" (*sultān al-ghāzī*) was transformed. Instead, the perception was now of sedentary sultans, something which had already begun in the early seventeenth century.[57] The Ottoman economy, heavily based on the fief system (*tımar*), and the 'classical' military system were by then almost defunct. The state could not reconcile its imperial ambitions with its medieval economy. The janissaries, the basic corps of the Ottoman military, were increasingly involved in trade and unwillingly attending campaigns. Ahmed III, having noticed their interference with the political process

[55] *Topkapı* à Versailles, (1999), p.307
[56] İrepoğlu, (1999), p.29-35.
[57] Findley, (2006), p.66.

during the 1703 dethronement of his elder brother Mustafa II, realized that this previously-important military group had now become a troublesome institution.

As part of the fief system renovation programme implemented, he had the land law reorganized in 1705.[58] Due to his support of these new laws, Ahmed was given the title 'law-giver', joining the group of three earlier sultans given this title: Bāyezid II (r.1481-1512), Selī m I (r.1512-1520) and Süleyman I (r.1520-1566). In the first three years of his reign, Ahmed appointed four grand-viziers, one after the other. However, the government only gained stability after the appointment of Ali Paşa of Çorlu, in May 1706.

Unlike the second half, the first half of Ahmed's reign was politically unstable. In July 1709, King Charles XII of Sweden, after being defeated by Tsar Peter the Great at Poltava and seeking refuge at Bender on the Deniester within Ottoman territory, urged the Sultan to take up arms against the tsar, and on November 20, 1710 war was declared between the two empires. The Russian and Ottoman armies met in July 1711 after Peter overran Moldavia, but the Russian army was surrounded after running out of food supplies and was forced to retreat. A treaty was signed forthwith in which the Tsar agreed to cede the fortress of Azov to the Ottomans, raze the other fortresses, to no longer interfere with either the Tartars or Poland, and was no longer allowed to maintain an ambassador in İstanbul. Charles, for most of the next three years, continued to incite the Sublime Porte, mostly due to the Swedish king`s efforts, the Ottomans declared war on Russia three consecutive times in December 1711, November 1712 and April 1713. A final treaty to end the wars was reached only in June 1713.

Ahmed was displeased with the foreign policy of his grand vizier Ali Paşa of Çorlu, the leading figure behind the wars against Russia and the related unrest. As a result, in April 1713, the Sultan's son-in-law), Silahdar Ali Paşa, was appointed grand-vizier and peace was re-established with Russia. It was Silahdar Ali Paşa who played a pivotal role in the signing of the June 1713 treaty.

On the 9th of December 1714, war was again declared, but this time on Venice and an army under Silahdar Ali Paşa's command re-conquered the areas that had earlier

[58] Akgündüz, (2002), p.24

been lost to her. This success alarmed Austria and in April 1716, Emperor Charles VI provoked the Porte into a declaration of war. The unsuccessful battle, also commanded by Silahdar Ali Paşa, ended with the Passarovitz peace signed on 21 July 1718, whereby Belgrade, Banat, and little Wallachia were ceded to Austria. This failure was a real disappointment for Ahmed and after the grim conditions imposed by this treaty, İstanbul's economy suffered from increased inflation and all of its attendant evils.[59]

Even before he became the grand vizier in 1718, İbrahim Paşa of Nevşehir was the second leading figure of the empire after Ahmed III. He joined the Mora campaign in 1715, and was appointed as the city of Nish's minister of finance the following year.[60] This post must have helped him realize the downturn of the state's finances and, due to his insight of this sensitive financial situation he avoided war as much as possible during his vizierate. İbrahim Paşa's policy of peace suited Ahmed III as well since he had no wish to lead any military campaigns, in addition to the fact that his interest in art and culture made him reluctant to leave his İstanbul.

The Tulip Era, which was not a period of absolute serenity, officially began on 20 October 1718, the date İbrahim Paşa became grand-vizier. This period witnessed military successes, such as the temporary extension of Ottoman rule over tracts of western Iran. The decline of the Safavids had plunged Iran into a state of anarchy and in 1723 Ottoman forces occupied Tiflis. During his part in the successful Iran campaign in 1722 and 1723, Ahmed was sending letters to İbrahim Paşa praising his government.[61]

However, pride in the victory against Iran lasted only until the Ottoman defeat by the recently enthroned Iranian ruler, Nādir Shah, in 1730. This defeat led to a revolt by the people of İstanbul. This was primarily conducted by the conservative and the poor, who disliked the luxurious and Frankish manners of the court. In addition, Ahmed`s invitation of a French engineering officer to prepare plans for the reform of the army increased the unrest among the janissaries, who revolted with the support of the trade guilds under the leadership of a janissary named Patrona Halil.

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[59] Olson, (1976), p.74
[60] Ibid, p.36
[61] Uzunçarşılı, (1956), p.167

The Patrona Halil Revolt

The revolt began on 28 September 1730 and resulted in the Sultan being forced to appoint many of the rebel leaders to the highest offices of the Empire with the backing of the '*ulemā*.[62] According to the eyewitness report of Destārī Salih Efendi "it was İbrahim Paşa who was most disliked by the people of İstanbul and Ahmed III's limitless trust in him caused the end of both".[63]

When the revolt began, a partially armed crowd of thousands gathered in the main square of the city, *At Meydanı* – the Byzantine *hippodrome*. Ahmed III and İbrahim Paşa had earlier crossed to Üsküdar with the army in preparation for a march towards Iran. When the news of the outbreak reached them, they returned to the palace only to be faced by the rebel demands for the heads of several members of the court, including the grand-vizier, the *Kapudan* Paşa, the *Şeyhülislām*, the *Kahyā Bey* and other high ranking officials.

Finding no support forthcoming from his troops, the Sultan decided to give up his beloved İbrahim Paşa. Thus, his daughter Fatma Sultan was widowed by the mob when İbrahim was sixty-four and she was twenty-six.[64] İbrahim's corpse, together with those of the *Kapudan* Paşa and the *Kahya Bey*, were brought out to the janissaries in the morning of the 29th and Ahmed was dethroned on the 30th of September, 1730. Even after his dethronement was announced, he reacted stoically and recited the *Quranic* verse; *Inna al-'arza li-llāhi yariṣuhā - man yasha' min 'ibādihi*[65] *- tu'ti al-mulk man tasha' wa tanziu al-mulk mimman tasha'*[66] (My righteous servants will inherit the world – You give control to whoever You will and remove it from whoever You will).[67] The Patrona Halil Revolt was observed and

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[62] Olson, (1976), p.74
[63] Destari, (1962), p.3
[64] Goodwin, (1999), p.88
[65] The *Qur'an*, *Surat al-Anbiya*, Verse:105 This verse is actually incomplete. The full verse is *inna al-'arz li-llāhi yariṣuha* (*al-'ibādi al-ṣāliḥūn*). [*Destārī Sālih Tārihi*, (1962), p.36].
[66] The *Qur'an*, *Sūrat al-Al-i Imrān*, Verse:26 The same combination of *Quranic* verses was recited by Mahmud I, in the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, following his accession. [*Destārī Sālih Tārihi*, (1962), p.36]
[67] Ibid, p.17 On his enthronement, Mahmud I sent some food by Musāhib Abdullah Ağa to the dethroned Ahmed III as a sign of respect. Destārī Salih Efendi notes that Ahmed III cried with anger as he received this gift (!) and said: "How quick, how prompt!" [*Destārī Sālih Tārihi*, (1962), p.20]

reported in detail by European ambassadors and only seven years later, in 1737, a book on the revolt was published in Venice.[68]

I.2.2 Culture

Ahmed III's reign was not a period of outstanding political achievements but it was indeed an era of luminous cultural and artistic innovations. The Sultan was not a brilliant military strategist or an acclaimed legislator but a lover of art, a bibliophile, and a gifted calligrapher and poet. The 12 years of the vizierate of İbrahim Paşa, following the peace of Passarovitz, witnessed a remarkable change in the culture of the upper-classes, art and architecture.

This short period, the so-called Tulip Age, was named after the tulip as this flower had become extremely popular and over two thousand varieties were cultivated in İstanbul alone. This was not the first time in Ottoman history that a passion for flowers, particularly tulips, flourished among the upper-class. A similar interest in flowers and gardening had taken place under Ahmed I as well.[69] This time, however, it was an extreme passion and each famous tulip was poetically named after a beautiful youth. Grand-vizier İbrahim Paşa's favourite tulip was called 'the blue pearl'.[70]

The Tulip Age marked a period of outstanding social and cultural change in which the Ottoman elite turned its face from Isfahan to Paris. Artists and scholars, for the first time in Ottoman history, found Persian culture less and less inspiring. It was the same for the ruling class which, after all, thought of Iran as an ineffectual neighbour. Chronicler Raşid Efendi dedicated a whole chapter in his history to the accounts of the Ottoman ambassador to Isfahan, Dürrī Efendi, whose critical statements about the Persian court found approval with a common desire to turn away from Persian culture and taste, which until the mid-sixteenth century had been the cultural

[68] Storia delle due ribellioni in Constantinopoli nel M.DCC.XXX. e XXXI. Nella Deposizione di Acmet III. E nell' Innalzamento al Trono Mahmoud V. Composta sopra manuscritti originali ricevuti da Constantinopoli. Aggiuntavi una Lettera del Co: d'Osterman Vice Cancelliere dell' Impero di Russia , scritta al Gran Visire, per giutisicare la condotta della Imperatrice, e mostrare la Giustizia della Guerre presente, dichiarata contra I Turchi, e Tartari, Par Luigi Pavini, in Venezia, MDCCXXXVII.
[69] Sakaoğlu, (2003), p.206
[70] Mansel, (1988), p.49

standard to which the Ottoman elite inspired. In addition, court poets praised the beauties of İstanbul while belittling the Safavids, who were struggling to keep their dynasty afloat, as well as their capital of Isfahan, which in its hey-day had been known by the name *nisf-i jihān,* meaning 'half the world'.[71]

The Tulip Age gave birth to a new, sincere interest in Western culture, particularly that of France. Yirmi-sekiz Mehmet Çelebi, the Ottoman ambassador to France between 1720 and 1721, was asked to observe European life and culture and report back to the court in full detail.[72] The short expression "...we were filled with admiration" from his account, conveys a feeling for this general interest.[73]

During this period, old and new fashions, foreign and local traditions came together. Novel artistic forms, building types, designs, colours, and decorative vocabularies flourished.[74] In almost every branch of art and architecture local and foreign merged. Pavilions and gardens were built more often than mosques and many of them were built to designs imported from the West. Novelties, in the so-called *tarz-ı nev* (new style), fascinated the Ottoman elite and marked the beginning of an irresistible current that would become the main issue of the upcoming generations and re-shape the future.

20th century historiographers have interpreted the reign of Ahmed III as the dawn of the Westernization of the Ottomans, fitted in the era 1718-1730 under the heading of the Tulip Age, which began to function as a code implying Westernisation, modernisation and progress.[75] The similar idea of conceptualizing a 'Süleymanic Golden Age' has been criticized by Cemal Kafadar, in his article "The Myth of the Golden Age". He also mentions the catchy name "Tulip Age", and insinuates that

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[71] This statement refers to the Persian proverb, *Isfahān nisf-i jihān*; 'Isfahan is half the world'. See; Erimtan, (1999), p.290

[72] Erimtan, (1999), p.288 Also see; İrepoğlu 1986. The Accounts of Mehmed Çelebi have partly been published. *Yirmisekiz Mehmed Efendi Sefaretnāmesi* (1976). In French: *Sefaretnāme – Rekation de'l ambassade de Mehmed Efendi a la Cour de France en 1721 ecrite et traduit par Julian Galland* (Constantinople-Paris 1757).

[73] Raşid, (1865), vol:V, p.367

[74] Hamadeh, (2004), p.4

[75] For further discussion see: Erimtan, (2006), pp. 260-262

these type of interpretations of Ottoman history is nothing more than historiographical construction.[76]

As discussed by Can Erimtan, beside his interest in the West, Ahmed III was willing to establish tangible links with the Ottoman past. This can best be observed in his cultural policies, including the reorganisation of the Kağıthāne area with some reference to the Safavid architectural image created in Isfahan by Shah Abbas.[77]

The tiles produced in the Tekfursaray kilns founded by the Sultan in İstanbul display no Western influence. In contrast, the major innovative element in the decorative repertoire can be related to an interest in the Mughal world. As discussed by Hamadeh "the emerging cultural contact with the Mughals, whose aesthetics (visual and literary), and decorative styles and techniques penetrated the Ottoman vocabulary more than ever before".[78]

As will be discussed in detail, Ahmed III's revitalist approach and desire for establishing links with the past is also visible in some of his calligraphic works including those directly inspired by Timurid and Aqqoyunlu master calligraphers, as well as those imitating the late 15th century Ottoman master Şeyh Hamdullah. His profound interest in the arts of the book, particularly albums, is certainly related to the classic Ottoman 'ideal sultan image', which stretches back to the Timurid proto-type.

Among sources of foreign influence, trade with Mughal India is atteion-worthy. Indian products, in particular textiles, were favoured by the Ottoman upper classes.[79] Indian textiles were imported via Iran by Armenian merchants and the Armenian trade network between Kütahya and Isfahan played an important role in the formation of new motifs, influenced by the decorations of Indian textiles.[80]

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[76] Kafadar, (1993), p.40 C. Kafadar. "The Myth of the Golden Age: Ottoman Historical Consciousness in the Post-Süleymanic Era", *Süleyman the Second and his Time*, Istanbul, 1993, pp.37-48. Also see: Erimtan, (2006), p.259.
[77] Erimtan, (1999). pp.287-290
[78] Hamadeh, (2004), p.236
[79] Saner, (1999), p.47
[80] Crowe, (2007), p.2

The Müteferrika Printing Press

The Sultan's approval of the foundation of a Muslim printing press was a revolutionary step which is considered to be a turning point in text production and publication, not only for the Ottomans, but the entire Muslim world. The foundation of the Müteferrika press in İstanbul, in 1724, by İbrahim Müteferrika, is the leading cultural innovation that was introduced to the daily life of the Ottoman elite.[81] The first attempt for its foundation came from Mehmed Said Efendi, who had visited Paris with his father Yirmi-sekiz Mehmed Çelebi. After Mehmed Said Efendi and İbrahim Müteferrika requested permission for the formation of a printing press, it was officially founded in July 1727 on the order of İbrahim Paşa.[82] Following the first printed book, the *Vankulu* dictionary, published in 1729, the second book, *Tuḥfat al-kibār fī Afsār al-Biḥār* of Kātib Çelebi was printed in the same year, and was dedicated to Ahmed III by İbrahim Paşa.[83]

The introduction of the printing press gave birth to social, cultural and even artistic novelties, including the refinement of certain calligraphic styles. The printing press announced the end of the age of handwritten manuscripts as a result of which, from the eighteenth century onwards, calligraphers were obliged to increasingly concentrate on the aesthetic qualities of their calligraphy rather than the functional.

The late arrival of the printing press in the Ottoman world has long been a matter of debate among scholars. The answer to this question is somehow related to the culture surrounding Ottoman calligraphy and the taste of bibliophiles of the time. As stated by Suraiya Faroqhi, following a decree issued by Murād III (r.1574-1595) in 1588, it was permitted to import books printed in the Arabic alphabet that had been published in Europe.[84] However, Ottoman readers showed little interest in these books. According to Faroqhi, many İstanbul bibliophiles regarded the Arabic characters generally used in Europe as decidedly unattractive. This was related to the fact that many European printers based their typefaces on North African models,[85] which were unfamiliar in İstanbul and were seen as foreign. Many Ottoman scholars and

[81] Uzunçarşılı, (1982), p.513-15. Also see; Gencer, (2010), pp.155-194.
[82] Uzunçarşılı, (1956), p.158
[83] Babinger, (2004), p.19
[84] Faroqhi, (2005), p.94
[85] Ibid, p.95

literary figures, therefore, were concerned that the Muslim printing press would have the same aesthetic and considered this a threat to the continuation of the hand written scripts highly esteemed by the early-modern İstanbul elite. The introduction of the printing press was therefore seriously criticized by many scholars and calligraphers. Their opposition was overcome only after a *fetwa* (the written opinion of a *mufti* on a matter involving religious law) issued by the Şeyhülislam Abdullah Efendi was issued that approved of it.[86]

Scientific and Scholarly Works

The need for the 'modernization' of basic scientific resources was recognized by almost all scholars. As a result, some courtly scholar-poets, including the head-poet Osmanzāde Tāib Efendi, the poets Neylī Efendi, Seyyid Vehbī Efendi, Nahīfī Efendi, the head-librarian Nedīm Efendi, and the historian Sālim Efendi, founded a society for the translation of essential books from Arabic and Persian into Turkish.[87] In this instance, one could argue that the intelligentsia were aware of the lack of recent, updated scientific texts, but in their eyes Arabic remained the premier language of science. As a result, European scientific texts were still being neglected. This tend can be exemplified by the fact that İstanbul's traditional Arabic name, *Qustantiniyyah*, was removed from newly minted coins and the Turkish name, *Islām-bol* (where Islam abounds), was applied in its stead. Whether in Arabic, Persian or Turkish, it is certain that the Ahmed III was aware of the importance of updated scientific books,[88] and in relation to this, the export of rare manuscripts was strictly prohibited.[89] Five new libraries were founded in the capital, including the Sultan's own imperial library in the Topkapı Palace, of which Nedīm Efendi (d.1730), the poet, was made curator. Ten years before Ahmed III was to sacrifice him to the rebels, İbrahim Paşa had already turned over 1,525 titles to the library he

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[86] Uzunçarşılı, (1956), p.160
[87] Erünsal, (1994), p.706
[88] Works valuable both in terms of their scientific content and calligraphy were bought and endowed by Ahmed III to his library. Among these an extremely rare manuscript on medicine, *Kitābu Ḥunāyn bin Ishāq fī al-Masāil wa Acwibatiha fī al-Tibb*, copied by court calligrapher Ş eyh Hamdullah for the personal library of Sultan Mehmed II is mention-worthy [TSMK,A.1996] [Tüfekçioğlu, (1996), p.67].
[89] Raşid, vol:4, p.238

had founded (*waqf*), which indicates somewhere in the region of, or more than, 1,700 volumes.[90]

The grand-vizier, İbrahim Paşa, played a crucial role in the formation of this innovative cultural atmosphere as an open-minded, highly intellectual administrator. His support of the translation activities, particularly of those relating to basic historical sources, is remarkable. When he noticed that the 24-volume Arabic history *Iqd al Jumān fi Tārikh-i Ahl al-Zamān*, which he received as a gift from his son-in-law, Mehmed Paşa, was full of copying mistakes,[91] he ordered a second complete set from the library of the Selīmiye Mosque in Edirne, had each of the 24 volumes translated into Turkish and dedicated them to Ahmed III.[92] In the following year, İbrahim Paşa commissioned the translation of the Persian text *Ḥabīb al-Siyar,* by Khandmīr (d.1535).[93]

Many new books on Ottoman and Islamic history were compiled and dedicated to Sultan Ahmed and/or İbrahim Paşa. The *Fihris-i Düvel* (*Dynastic Index*) comprising the history of the 124 Muslim dynasties that existed prior to 1725, was compiled by Abdurrahman Münīb Efendi (d.1742) and dedicated to İbrahim Paşa.[94] Historian Afvī Mīr Mehmed Efendi (d.1733) was commissioned by the Sultan himself to write a comprehensive *Tārih-i Al-i Osmān* (Ottoman History) in 1726. Osmanzāde Tāib Efendi (d.1723) was commissioned by İbrahim Paşa to produce the *Ḥadīkat al-Mulūk* (Garden of Monarchs) and the *Ḥadīkat al-Vuzarā* (Garden of Viziers). Polymath historian Prince Dimitrie Cantemir (d.1723), a Romanian convert who lived in İstanbul between 1687 and 1710, stands out with his works on Ottoman history and music. Lastly, Destārī Sālih Efendi, who wrote on the Patrona Halil Revolt and the tragic end of the Tulip Period, is mention-worthy. In addition, Çelebi-zade İsmail Asım Efendi (d.1760), Nazmīzāde Hüseyin Murtaza (d.1722), Rāşid Mehmed Paşa (d.1735), Silahdār Fındıklılı Mehmed Efendi (d.1723), Şeyhī Mehmed

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[90] Artan, (1999), p.90

[91] Masterly written and illuminated manuscripts were among the foremost gifts given amongst the Ottoman elite. For instance, viziers marrying princesses were expected to send royal gifts to the palace including important manuscripts, precious carpets, textiles and jewellery. [For further information see; Uluçay, (1958), pp.139-148]

[92] Çelebizade Asım (1865), p.358-361.

[93] Çelebizade Asım (1865), p.360. Uzunçarşılı, (1956), p.154

[94] Bayrak, (1982), p.6

Efendi (d.1732) are leading historians, all of whom produced outstanding chronicles during this period.

Classical resources and basic references on Ottoman history, mostly compiled in the sixteenth century, were summarized and partly updated during the reign of Ahmed III as well. Osmanzāde Tāib Efendi shortened Ali Efendi's (d.1600) *Maḥāzīn al-Ādāb* as *Talkhis-i Mahāzīn al-Ādāb* and Kınalı-zāde Ali Efendi's (d.1571) *Ahlāq-i 'Alāī* as *Ḫulāsat al-Akhlāq*.[95] Court poet Nedīm Efendi summarized the *Jāmi' al-Duwal* (Collection of Dynasties) of the seventeenth century Ottoman historian Müneccim-başı Ahmed Dede.[96] A clear campaign to update the scientific resources was therefore engaged in at this time, which enlarged scope for scholarly research. *Risāle fi al-Bāh* (Treatise on Sexuality), for instance, compiled by master calligrapher and court physician Kātizāde Mehmed Refī ', was also among the scientific works dedicated to Ahmed III.[97]

Literature

The innovative and "secularizing" trend that characterized the period can best be observed in literature. Court poets Nedīm Efendi (d.1730), Rāsih Bey (d.1731), Seyyid Vehbī Efendi (d.1736), Ismail Beliğ Efendi (1730) and Izzet Ali Paşa (1734) composed poems in praise of the Sultan and Dāmād İbrahim Paşa, highlighting the flourishing beauty of the city and its gardens under their "prosperous" government. Pleasurable garden parties organized by members of the ruling class, best described by the poet Nedīm Efendi, indicate a severe need for an escape from the palatial atmosphere. Most of the time Ahmed III and his grand-vizier were alternately the honoured guests of each other. There is even a couplet composed by the Sultan in praise of one of his imperial gardens. The couplet reads;

"Kadd-i dilber gibi dil eğlencesi

[95] Ibid, p.175
[96] Uzunçarşılı, (1956), p.156
[97] Özcan, (1991), p.490

Gam-küsârım Kara-ağaç Bahçesi"[98]

(You are my heart's delight, like the figure of a beloved sight:

You are my disperser of gloom, Kara-ağaç Garden...)

The frequency of these parties can be followed day by day in the history of the court chronicler Raşid Efendi, *Tarih-i Raşid*.[99] With the Patrona Halil rebellion in September 1730, however, the garden parties and banquets came to an end. Nevertheless, novelties in art, urban design and the entertainments of the upper-class that were introduced in this period marked the beginning of a new Ottoman image.

I.2.3 Patronage of Arts and Architecture

Reigning in a period of economic decline, Ahmed III never became a great patron of architecture. Unlike many of his predecessors he did not commission a mosque, yet his mother, Emetullah Gülnuş Vālide Sultan, built one for herself in the Üsküdar district of İstanbul. However, the complete body of his monumental calligraphic works could perhaps be considered as a visual mosque, and as stated by Lings, "in

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[98] Ahmed III, p.61

[99] On 26 *rabi' al-akhir* (1704) Sultan Ahmed visited the pavilion in the region of Kara- ağa ç . On 16 *jamad al-awwal* (1704) he invited his grand-vizier to a great banquet in the *Tersāne* (shipyard). He visited the gardens in the region of Kemerler on 18 *rabi' al-awwal* (1705). When describing these parties, Raşid occasionally notes that 'the nature of the most-exalted (sultan) was in a state of viewing gardens'. The sultan returned to the gardens of the *Topkapı* Palace from the gardens of Kara-bagche, on 9 *jamad al-awwal* (1705). In 1706 the first visit was to the garden of *Tersāne*. On 14 *Shawwāl* 1119 (1707 A.D.), due to the sultan's most-exalted wish to view blossoming flowers, a *çerāğan* (special illumination on festive occasions) was held in the gardens of the *Topkapı* Palace. In the following week, the most-exalted wished to move to the gardens of Kara- ağa *Ramadan* 19 1120 (1708 A.D.), the most-exalted moved to the gardens of Kara-ağa *çil-agin*. On 21 (1709 A.D.) another *cheraghan* was held in the gardens of the palace. On 12 *Rabi' al-akhir* 1121 (1709 A.D.), the sultan joined a banquet in the pavilion of his grand-vizier by the shore of the Bosphorus, in the region of Kuru-ceşme. On 22 *rabi' al-akhir* 1121 (1709 A.D.) the most exalted moved to the pavilion of Kara Mehmed Paşa on the shores of the Bosphorus, in the region of Beshiktaş. On 13 *Muharram* 1122 (1710A.D.) the sultan was invited to a banquet by Kapudan Mehmed Paşa in the *Tersāne*. On 23 *Muharram* 1122 (1710 A.D.) the sultan was invited to the seashore pavilion of Corlulu Ali Paşa, in the region of Arnavutk öyü, etc. [For fu Raşid, (1865), Vol:III, pp.139-180]

the case of calligraphy, the change is, perhaps, even more striking than that of architecture".[100]

In 1703, the Sultan transferred the court from Edirne back to İstanbul after a gap of almost 50 years, during which time the capital had been neglected; many structures had been consumed by fire,[101] or had become derelict and run down due to lack of use. Ahmed's reign, therefore, was an age of restoration and artistic innovation that went hand in hand with the re-beautification of the capital, and with the repairing and refurbishing of the old monuments of the city.[102] This list was extensive and included extensive repairs to the Byzantine walls between 1722 and 1724. In addition, a dam was built to provide water from the springs in the region of Belgrade. Mehmed Agha of Kayseri, Ahmed III's chief architect, was in charge of many architectural projects and the Armenian architect Melton, celebrated for his accounts on the city`s districts, was the second in charge.[103]

The Sultan, in anticipation of the transfer of the court from Edirne to the reinstated capital, commissioned new additions to the apartments in the royal residential complexes and asked for an extensive renovation of the Harem in the Topkapı Palace. Furthermore, the main entrance to the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet (*Hırka-i Saadet Dairesi*) in the third (*Enderūn*) courtyard was reorganized, while its main façade was decorated with Ahmed III's own epigraphic inscriptions and polychrome tiles produced in the workshops of Tekfur Sarayı in İstanbul.[104]

Of the work undertaken at the Harem, a new apartment was added in 1705.[105] Known as the Fruit Room (*Yemiş Odası*) because the walls of this celebrated chamber were painted entirely with depictions of fruit dishes and vases of flowers in lacquer,[106] its decorative repertoire created a new fashion for interior decoration. It became the major source of inspiration for the interior designs schemes of many

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[100] Lings, (1976), p.12
[101] Fires were extremely frequent due to the predominantly wooden structures of Istanbul; one hundred and forty fires are known to have occurred during the twenty seven years of Ahmed III`s reign.
[102] Penzer, (1966), p.93
[103] The employment of Armenian architects and craftsmen in this period, formed the basis of the Armenian architect-families of the 19th century such as the Balyans. [Incicyan, (1976), p.40]
[104] Aydın, (2004), 17.
[105] Yerasimos, (2000), p.223
[106] Saner, (1999), p.37

water-side residences on the Bosphorus and provincial mansions.[107] During this period structures built on a smaller scale appear to have been more in vogue. The Fruit Room, for example, was the smallest room to be constructed in the Topkapı Palace.[108] This indicates an almost minimalistic approach that was also reflected in music and literature produced at this time.

Later additions to the Topkapı Palace during the reign of Ahmed III include the quarters of the pages were remodelled,[109] with an additional dormitory, the Seferli Koğuşu, built in 1719, in the third court.[110] The most important addition to this inner court was, however, the library built in 1781 that still carries today the name of Ahmed III,[111] right behind the Throne Room (*Arz Odası*), built possibly in commemoration of his returning to residence in the Palace. As previously mentioned, unlike most of his predecessors (the exception being Murād III (r.1574-1595)), Ahmed III did not build a mosque in his own name. One may ask why. Firstly, since his mother, Emetullah Vālide, had already built her mosque, the construction of a second mosque would have been an expensive project. One may even suggest that the Sultan actually delegated a major portion of his architectural patronage to his mother. Secondly, his talent in calligraphy likely created an urge to build a visual legacy consisting of his calligraphic works, including monumental inscriptions, calligraphic panels and albums. As with the construction of a mosque, his calligraphic works legitimized Ahmed III as Sultan and Caliph.

Dedicated to the Sultan's mother, Emetullah Gülnuş Sultan, the complex of Yeni Vālide Mosque was completed in 1710. This complex, comprising the mosque, the mausoleum of the Sultan's mother, shops, a primary school, a fountain and a *muvakkıt-hāne* (timing unit), was the greatest architectural achievement of Ahmed's reign, as well as being the last major classical mosque complex in the history of Ottoman architecture. Emetullah Gülnuş Vālide Sultan, a celebrated patron of

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[107] A common decorative repertoire can be observed between the Fruit Room of Ahmed III and mansions/palaces of Ottoman provinces such as the Bait al-'Araqtanji and the Bait al-Quwatli in Damascus. [See; Brigid Keenan, *Damascus – Hidden Treasures of the Old City*, (2004), p.132]
[108] Penzer, (1966), p.196
[109] Avcıoğlu, (2008), p.201
[110] Goodwin, (1999), pp.128, 131.
[111] Rāşid, (1865), vol:V, p. 128.

architecture, also commissioned the Hasekiyye complex in Mecca, the Yeni Mosque in the Galata district of İstanbul, and many fountains on the hajj route.[112]

Additionally, architecture of this period was patronised by leading members of the court. The Mosque of Kapıdan İbrahim Paşa (1707), the Mosque of Ali Paşa Çorlu (1716), the Ahmediye Mosque (1721), the İsmail Ağa Mosque (1724), the Mirzazāde Mosque (1728) are among the notable extant religious monuments of built in İstanbul during Ahmed III's reign.[113]

Following the Köprülü Library proto-type, built in 1667, libraries constructed in this era were built to be freestanding structures.[114] These freestanding libraries, such as the Şehid Ali Paşa Library[115] in the district of Vefa (1715), the Library of Ahmed III in the Topkapı Palace (1719) and the library built by Dāmād İbrahim Paşa in the district of Şehzādebaşı (1720), indicate a departure from the classical Ottoman library, designed as an attachment to a pious complex.[116] Some relate this departure to the introduction of the printing press, which caused a need for separate storage facilities for books.[117]

As the leading library of the period, Ahmed III's in the Topkapı Palace stands apart from others of his reign. This was the first time that the library of the Palace had been constructed as a free-standing structure in its own right. The Sultan cared enough about the maintenance of his library to endow it with the income of three villages in the district of Tırhala.[118] Raşid Efendi, in his *Tārih* (*History*) dedicated a small but detailed section to describing this foundation of the royal library. He writes: "... Since the establishment of the Ottoman state, countless peerless manuscripts and their beautiful copies, that have both been presented as gifts and

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[112] Altınay, (undated), p.20; İnci, (1985), p.230
[113] İnci, (1985), p.224-226
[114] For a detailed survey on Ottoman book collectors see; Ulu ç, İ. (2006), pp.469-472
[115] Şehid Ali Paşa founded two smaller libraries before building the above-mentioned library in his name. The first one was founded in his own mansion in Üskübi district, Istanbul. The second was located in one of the rooms of his seaside mansion in the district of Kuzguncuk, Istanbul. [İsmail Erünsal, 'Osmanlılarda Kütüphane ve Kütüphaneci Geleneği', *Osmanlı* (1994) Vol:XI, p.706]
[116] 'Since the reign of Murad II (1421-1451) Ottoman libraries had been part of mosques, madrasas and dervish-lodges. Manuscript collections of '*ulema* were being endowed to a library, attached to a religious institution. The first library located into an individual building was the Köprülü Library founded in 1678.' [Erünsal, (1994) p.704-707] Also see; Erünsal (1996), pp.93-124.
[117] Canca, (1999), p.3
[118] *Firman*, *Topkapı* Palace Archieves, 15 RA 1136.

purchased due to interest, have been gathered and kept in the storages of the treasury of the imperial school of the royal palace, within cabinets, under the dust of forgetfulness... The most exalted Sultan thought that it was unfair to these many valuable books to be left aside, meaninglessly enclosed and kept away from the eyes of the scholars, and by the lead of divine grace, he decided that it would not be reasonable to take the responsibility of restricting the viewing of so many important books. He thus commissioned a library to be built in the imperial school (*Enderūn-i Humayun*) and ordered all valuable manuscripts and their beautiful copies in his treasury to be placed in the new library... He picked up a stone and he himself laid the base-stone of the library in the month of *rabi' al-akhir*, year one thousand one hundred and thirty one (1718 AD)".[119] Highly important calligraphic works were purchased by the Sultan and endowed to his library. Among these, an extremely fine *Qur'an* by Şeyh Hamdullah, dated 1503 AD, is worth mentioning; it was the fifth manuscript to arrive at the library.[120]

Ahmed III's enterprise of building his library appears to have been inspired by his great-grand father and namesake, Sultan Ahmed I (r.1603-1617), who created a reading room in the Imperial Harem north-west of the pavilion of Murād III.[121] It was no coincidence that Ahmed III used the same golden pickaxe for laying the foundation stone of his library that had once been used by Ahmed I to lay the foundation stone of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque in 1609.[122]

The construction of Ahmed III`s library began in early 1719 and was completed in 1720. One could suggest that as a dedicated man of the pen Ahmed III became one of the leading library patrons in Ottoman history. In addition to his library in the Topkapı Palace, he built a second next to his mother's complex in Üsküdar and a third one attached to the Mausoleum of his grandmother, Turhan Vālide Sultan, in the Yeni Cami complex in Emin [illegible]ü.[123]

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[119] Rāşid, (1865), Vol: V, p.128-9. 'According to the waqf deed of the library, dated 1726, four librarians were employed and a catalogue of the holdings of the library was prepared'. [Erünsal, (1994), p.708]
[120] TSMK,A.Inv. No.5 The frontispiece and colophon of this *Qur'an* has been published by Professor Ugur Derman in *Doksan Dokuz Istanbul Mushafi*, Istanbul, (2010), pp.22-25.
[121] Yerasimos, (2000),p.96
[122] Sakaoğlu, (2003), p.204
[123] Erünsal, (1994), p.707

As an era of artistic and cultural expansion, the reign of Ahmed III marked the beginning of the transformation of the Ottoman capital into something beyond the *Dār al-Khilāfa* (House of the Caliphate). Summer palaces and water-side mansions were built in İstanbul for both the Sultan and members of his court; these included no less than 120 mansions and pavilions. Yirmi-sekiz Mehmed Çelebi brought back plans of many of the details of Versailles and Marley-le-Roi, but these were often only partially understood and, when applied to pavilions constructed for the members of the Ottoman upper-classes, created a seemingly fantasy world.[124]

France, however, was not the only source of inspiration for these grand residences. As discussed by Shirine Hamadeh, the urban building programme of the period also sought architectural models for mansions and pavilions in Iran. Ahmed III's Sa'd-ābād Palace is interestingly comparable with the Chihil Sutun of Abbas II. Similarly, the Kağıthāne promenade of İstanbul has been compared to the *Chahar-bāgh* promenade of Isfahan.[125] One could argue that the Kağıthane and *Chahar-bāgh* promenades represent the last stage of competition between the Ottomans and the Safavids, for in the writings of Ahmed`s court poets are comparisons between the two with the poets always extol the superior virtues of the Ottoman Kağıthane. At times, it appears that they were also drawing comparisons between the Ottoman promenade and the *Chahar-bāgh* attached to the Taj Mahal instead of the *Chahar-bāgh* in Isfahan. The increasing interest of the Ottomans in the court life of Mughal India at this time is something I will return to below.

The impact of Mehmed IV's patronage (Ahmed III's father) on the architecture of Edirne and its resulting impact on the architecture of his son have so far been mostly overlooked. Mehmed IV, who reigned for almost 40 years (r.1648-1687), employed lighter and less expensive methods of construction in Edirne; he thus minimized the scale of secular architectural patronage. As stated by Dr. Can Erimtan, "If the cultural and architectural landscape of the Ottoman dominions were to be scanned for parallels or reference points, one eventually ends up with the figure of Mehmed IV and his unprecedented achievements in Edirne. On a purely technical and formal level, the programs and projects initiated by Ahmed III appear to be a continuity of

[124] Goodwin, (1987), p.373
[125] Hamadeh, (2004), p.232

those propagated by his father, Mehmed IV".[126] Although increasingly less grand in scale, secular architecture remained the primary field of courtly patronage during the Tulip Era, when, following his father`s lead, Ahmed also preferred to construct his royal, secular architectural commissions primarily in wood.

Outstanding buildings constructed by members of the court during this period include: the Büyük Bend mansion, the Çırağan waterside-mansion, the Sa'dābād Palace (1722),[127] the Feyzābād mansion, the Emnābād waterside-mansion, the Humayunābād waterside-mansion, the Neşatābād waterside-mansion, the Süreyyā mansion, the Sherefābād mansion, the Sofa mansion, the Kara-ağaç waterside mansion, the Kandilli Palace, and the Beşiktaş Palace on the shores of the Bosphorous.

This frenzied commissioning of secular buildings during Ahmed's reign, as well as the restoration of official structures and monuments in İstanbul, was perhaps partially due to the deep-rooted competition between the Ottoman capital and Isfahan. As mentioned above, this sentiment is evident in the writings of the court poets, in particular Nedīm, who constantly compared Isfahan with İstanbul. It is certain that the reorganisation of the Kağıthāne district strongly corresponded with certain elements of the Safavid's architectural vocabulary created by Shah Abbas I in Isfahan.[128] The curious kinship of the newly designated Persian names given to the imperial and grandees' palaces and gardens with those of the Safavid capital also support this statement; one such example is Sa'dābād in İstanbul and Sa'ādetābād in Isfahan.[129] The Sa'dābād Palace, built by the chief-architect Mehmed Efendi of Kayseri, was the venue preferred for outdoor festivities by the Sultan and İbrahim Paşa.[130] These royal buildings, as discussed by Avcıoğlu, could be regarded as the material representation of a new sultanic image in İstanbul.[131]

As alluded to above, during Ahmed's reign there was a shift in imperial building policy from monumental commissions to less expensive ones, including fountains.

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[126] Erimtan, (1999), p.289 For Edirne's significance in relation to the history of calligraphy see; Derman (1965), pp.311-319.
[127] Ibid, , p.287
[128] Erimtan, (1999), p.290
[129] Hamadeh, (2004), p.234
[130] Uzunçarşılı, (1956), p.164
[131] Avcioglu, (2008), p.203

This was a result of the decline in the imperial treasury's income, and was manifested by the increase in patronage of public fountains in the eighteenth century. These were among the least expensive charitable architecture that could be commissioned, but could be extremely ostentatious. The increasing interest in building fountains can also be explained by the rise of *mufti* and *vizier* households, which introduced alternative patronage in many fields. However, it was court patronage that introduced a new style of fountain, one which was built of marble, free-standing and constructed in a public square. The two locations which benefitted from this royal patronage were the two main public squares of the capital: Ayasofya and Üsküdar.

These public fountains, built in the names of Ahmed III and his mother, respectively, are the earliest examples of this new type. Here, one could suggest that just as Ahmed had his mother, Emetullah Vālide, construct the major royal mosque of his reign, even in building fountains he shared his patronage with her. These two fountains mark the beginning of the eighteenth century fashion for fountains constructed in public squares. The Ottoman elite financed the building of more than 200 fountains during the reign of Ahmed III,[132] while the number of fountains constructed continued to increase under his successor, Mahmud I (r.1730-1754).[133]

There are various interpretations on the possible sources of inspiration for the free-standing public fountains of Ahmed's reign. According to Avcıoğlu, Ahmed III's fountain on the Ayasofya square, built in 1729, is the first of its kind and is a direct descendant of elements, attitudes and forms present in the classical 'pavilion type'. Saner, seeing Mughal inspiration in the decorative fashion of depicting fruits in vases, argues that application of this sort, on public fountains in particular, originated from the so-called *chini-khāna* style of interior design in seventeenth-century Mughal India.[134] He argues that this decoration displays common architectural features with royal mausoleums of seventeenth-century Mughal India.[135]

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[132] Aynur&Karateke, (1995), pp.87-219, 220-253.

[133] Following the two public square fountains built by Ahmed III, five grand fountains were constructed during the reign of his successor, Mahmud I. [Goodwin, (1987), p.374]

[134] Saner, (1999), pp.36-39 Dr. Yolande Crowe has pointed out a similar influence of Indian textiles on the sudden appearance of "exotic" vegetal patterns on eighteenth-century Kütahya ceramics. According to Dr. Crowe the Armenian Merchant community, in other words the Armenian network,

It seems more likely, however, that this innovative decorative repertoire, consisting of flowers and fruits in vases, seen in both the Fruit Room of Ahmed III in the Topkapı Palace and his two public fountains, was inspired neither by Mughal nor local designs but by European design schemes. The designs used in the structures built by Ahmed III can instead be interpreted as a transformation of European decorative elements into a local dialect, derived primarily from the old capital of Edirne[136] and the structures built for Ahmed III`s father, Mehmed IV.

There are, however, depictions of vases containing fruits which appear on Ottoman fountains of a smaller scale that do not display any Western influence. One such example is the small marble Bereket-zāde fountain in the Galata district, built for Defterdār Mehmed Efendi in 1732.[137]

The new elements seen in the decorative repertoire of the period were paralleled by the use of a new script for architectural inscriptions, *nasta'līq,* which increased in popularity during Ahmed's reign. It was, for example, used for the band of poetic texts circumferencing the Fruit room of Ahmed III, as well as for the two public fountains he commissioned. In Ottoman art, the calligraphic style of *nasta'līq* had been in use since the mid-15th century. However, it was only during the eighteenth century that *nasta'līq* became the leading calligraphic style of poetic inscriptions, particularly on fountains and tomb stones. The expansion of the use of *nasta'līq* to epigraphic works in the eighteenth century must have therefore been inspired by the art of the book, since *nasta'līq* had been used for the texts of literary manuscripts, especially *Dīwān*s, since the fifteenth century.

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played an important role in the transfer of Indian goods to Anatolia via Iran. [Yolande Crowe, "Kütahya Patterns: out of the Blue" *Transaction of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, Vol:71, 2007, pp.1-8]

[135] "The fountain of Ahmed III displays common architectural elements and decorative features with the Mausoleum of Shah Newaz in Burhanpour built in 1618 and the 'I'timād al-Dawla in Agra built in 1628." [Saner, (1999), p.42-43] Similar decorative features such as Mughal-style flowers in vases in the so-called *Gazneli Mahmud Album* [Istanbul University Library, T.5461], dated 1768, indicate that the arrival of Mughal influence can be dated to the second half of the seventeenth century. [For more information on the *Gazneli Mahmud Album* see; Derman, (1974), pp.17-21]

[136] For a short survey on the decorative repertoire established in late seventeenth-century Edirne see: Ünver, (1962), pp.15-18.

[137] Goodwin, (1987), p.374

Ahmed III also wished to revitalise the production of Iznik ceramic tiles.[138] Ceramic factories at Kütahya and Iznik were therefore revived on his command and a new factory was founded in the district of Tekfur-sarayı, in İstanbul in 1725.[139] The Tekfur-sarayı workshops produced commissioned tiles for interior decoration as well as replacement tiles for those missing on classical Ottoman monuments,[140] thus also serving as a part of Ahmed's restoration policy as well.

In addition to classical square tiles, some early examples of individual tiles with calligraphic inscriptions surrounded with framing borders were produced in the Tekfur-sarayı kilns. These panel tiles appear to have been inspired by a small group of sixteenth-century Iznik ones which were often employed as monumental foundation inscriptions.[141] Following sixteenth-century Iznik proto-types, some of these Tekfur-sarayı tiles were decorated with calligraphic compositions. What is remarkable, however, is that these inscriptions were designed not by an ordinary calligrapher, but by Ahmed III himself. A Tekfur-sarayı tile, dated 1728, bearing a *tughra*-shaped composition of Ahmed III is in the Nevşehir Museum.[142] This example resembles the tile equivalent of contemporary framed calligraphic panels. The interaction between calligraphy and tile production during this period has so far not been a subject of scholarly debate.

It was not only ceramic production that was revitalised by Ahmed III. Local textile production was also supported and a textile factory, named *hatāī* (lotus blossom), after a famous decorative element, was founded.[143] The attempt to revitalise local arts was inspired partly by the attention that Europeans lavished on the preservation

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[138] Naza-Donmez, (1996), p.109
[139] Uzunçarşılı, (1956), p.157
[140] The last section of the calligraphic band of Iznik tiles in the Mosque of Mehmed Ağa, built in Istanbul in 1585, for instance, was completed with tiles produced in the Tekfur-sarayı workshops. This can be observed from the distinctive, almost "naturalistic", depiction of roses in these tiles that never appeared in Iznik. Professor Yıldız Demiriz has pointed out this early eighteenth-century restoration on the tiles of the Mosque of Mehmed Ağa in her article; Osmanlı Keramik ve Çini Sanatında Gül Terminolojisi ve Tanımı" [*Prof. Dr. Şerare Yetkin Anısına Çini Yazıları*, Sanat Tarihi Derneği Yayınları, Istanbul, 1996, pp.47-52]
[141] An Iznik panel tile which belongs to this small group, dated 1007AH/1598AD, was sold at Bonhams, London, on 15 April 2010, Lot:272.
[142] This tile has been published by E. Emine Nazan Dönmez in her article, "Nevşehir Müzesi'nde Bulunan Medine Camii Tasvirli Bir Çini Levha" [*Prof. Dr. Şerare Yetkin Anısına Çini Yazıları*, Sanat Tarihi Derneği Yayınları, Istanbul, 1996, pp.109-114]
[143] Uzunçarşılı, (1956), p.158

of their own material culture, applauded by Yirmi-Sekiz Mehmed Efendi in his accounts on the material and cultural riches of France.

Interior decoration and furniture must also be counted among the artistic fields subject to Western influence. Until the eighteenth century, Ottoman furniture was mainly limited to two groups of production: mosque furniture (*minbar*s, preacher's desks, *Qur'an* cases) and royal furniture (thrones, sofas, etc.). As the earliest known examples of European-inspired furniture, a group of Ottoman benches, household fittings, cabinets, cupboards and turban stands were produced during Ahmed III's reign.[144] The novelty of displaying calligraphy within framed panels must have been related to this transformation of taste in Ottoman interior design. As an outstanding novelty in the history of calligraphy, the topic of framed calligraphy will be discussed below in detail.

A new style was introduced into the arts of the book as well. The court painter Abdülcelīl Çelebi, better known as Levnī, worked on full-length paintings of the Sultan and members of the court elite.[145] His miniatures in the *Sūrnāme* (Book of Festivities), documenting the 1720 circumcision festival of the sons of Ahmed III, feature both classical and innovative styles. One of the main sources of inspiration for Levnī appears to have been the work of European painters, who were regular visitors to the Ottoman court. Levni exemplifies the court arts of his age, although there were other notable artists working outside the palace, such as Abdullah Buhari.[146]

Both foreign painters, such as the French painter Jan Baptiste Van-mour (1671-1737) and local painters, such as Barsegh,[147] were invited guests to the Palace. The works of Van-mour are particularly significant in terms of inspiring local artists. A true eye-witness of Ahmed III's court, Van-mour depicted daily scenes from the palace and the city in great detail and influenced many local painters.[148] The documentary nature of his works was enriched with elaborate full-length portraits of leading court

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[144] This group was named after pieces produced in Edirne, in the late seventeenth century, and called *Edirnekārī* (Edirne-ware).
[145] Bağcı, Serpil - Filiz Çağman - Günsel Renda - Zeren Tanındı, (2006), p.262-272.
[146] Atıl, (1993), p.184
[147] Incicyan, (1976), p.102
[148] See: Gül İrepoğlu, *Levni – Painting, Poetry, Colour*, Istanbul 1999.

figures, including the rebel leader Patrona Halil, who eventually dethroned Ahmed III.

The frequent visits of foreign and local painters to the palace and their works also influenced calligraphers. As will be discussed below in further detail, the idea of producing framed calligraphic panels to be hung on a wall must have been derived from the framed European paintings.[149] It was subsequently in this period that calligraphic panels were introduced as an equivalent to the Western canvas. This marked the beginning of a transition in the surfaces onto which calligraphy was applied, namely from manuscript and album pages to panels.

As for the creation of the other courtly arts, a rich collection of resources that documented there production is available. The written evidence from the Topkapı Palace Museum Archives shows the diminished demand for the various works produced in the court ateliers of this period. The employment and salary registers of the *ehl-i hiref* (the corps of the court artisans) provide a wealth of information regarding the best-supported arts and help us reach a better understanding of the extent of Ahmed III's patronage. According to these registers, the corps of wage receiving scribes (*kātibān*) at the court consisted of three individuals. Although this seems a meagre number, none of the other artisan corps had more than two members and the number of calligraphers also diminished to two following Ahmed III's dethronement.[150] Interestingly, there were no ink-makers employed in the court atelier until the Sultan's order in 1722.[151] The employment of additional silk tailors in 1715 indicates an increasing interest in costumes. Probably due to the Sultan`s lack of interest in jewellery, the number of court jewellers was decreased.[152] However, the number of court-employed book-binders, illuminators, watch-makers, saddlers, engravers, carpenters, furriers, sword-makers, goldsmiths, arrow-makers, glaziers and weavers remained the same, but never numbered more than two.

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[149] Local miniature painters could never have had a similar influence on the changing medium of calligraphy since they never used canvas. Their primary concern was the production of manuscripts and albums.
[150] Yaman, (2008), p.138
[151] Ibid, p.142
[152] Ibid, p.156

Although at this time the royal scriptorium does not appear to have had much in the way of production activity, the Ottoman elite's increasing demand and interest in calligraphy stimulated the production of luxury scribal accessories. In this era, the production of scribe's boxes, pen cases (*divit*), inkpots (*hokka*) and pen-sharpeners (*kalemtıraş*) increased immensely and formed an individual market for calligraphic accessories.[153] Relatedly, the production of exquisitely lacquered bindings, pen boxes and small calligrapher desks increased. Some of these lacquered works, particularly those signed by Ali Üsküdārī , display a distinctive style that reinterpreted decorative elements derived from the classical period.[154] The lacquered bindings and calligrapher desks that he executed bear poems in *nasta'līq* script around their edges which reflect those placed on the fountains of the period, pointing to a common aesthetic.

CHAPTER TWO

The Calligrapher Sultan and his Court of Calligraphers

[153] For detailed information see; Houston, (2007), p.9-67
[154] Duran, *(2008), p.22-28.*

Chapter II: The Calligrapher Sultan and his Court of Calligraphers

II.1. Patrons of Calligraphy in Early Eighteenth-Century İstanbul

Ahmed III's art and patronage cannot be understood without analysing the reasons for the constantly increasing prestige of calligraphers in Ottoman society. Enjoying the delights of being both a practitioner and patron of calligraphy at the same time, Ahmed III created an image of an ideal ruler through his own calligraphic works, although previous calligrapher-sultans of the seventeenth century, such as Ahmed II (r.1691-1695) and Mustafa II (r.1696-1703), played a preliminary role in the formation of this image.

By the end of Ahmed III's reign, the image of the "calligrapher-ruler" was well-established and was the type aspired to by all future Ottoman sultans. Among Ahmed III's sons, Prince Mehmed copied *Qur'an* manuscripts[155] and Prince Mustafa, the future Mustafa III (r.1757-1774), practiced *nasta'līq* calligraphy.[156] Of the Sultan's grandsons, Selīm III (r.1789-1807) executed calligraphic works in the so-called *ghubārī* (dust-script) technique, and Mahmud II (r.1808-1839) became famous for his outstanding *jalī thuluth* panels.[157]

Imitating both the artistry and patronage of Ahmed III, members of the ruling class and many high-ranking officials of his reign practised, or at least promoted, calligraphy. Furthermore, it was expected that members of the court were able to distinguish between calligraphic styles and appreciate mastery not only of court poetry but also calligraphy. Works by master calligraphers were collected by courtly figures as reflections of their connoisseurship. Owning calligraphy became a sign of culture and power like never before. İbrahim Paşa and Kaymak Mustafa Paşa owned calligraphic works by Ahmed Karahisārī, calligrapher to Süleyman I (r.1520-1566), and many other famous calligraphers, as well as Persian manuscripts and numerous calligraphic albums.[158] During the reign of the successive calligrapher-sultans

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[155] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.384
[156] Rado, (1980), p.168,171
[157] Ibid, pp.199-200 [Selīm III], p.204 [Mahmud II]
[158] Artan, (1999), p.89 For information on the pious endowments of Kaymak Mustafa Paşa see; Aktepe, (1969), pp.15-37

Ahmed II, Mustafa II and Ahmed III, Master calligraphers enjoyed a higher status than they had under previous rulers.

An increasing number of calligraphers were also employed as bureaucrats, which can be seen as a systematic bureaucratization of calligraphy. With this political occurrence, the status of calligraphers reached new heights and members of the upper classes were keen to practice calligraphy. Unlike earlier periods, calligraphers could also be trained under the supervision and patronage of powerful households of *Paşas* and *muftis,* who were able to promote calligraphic circles independent of the royal scriptorium.

In the sixteenth century, members of the ruling elite bearing the title of *Paşa* (mainly grand-viziers, viziers, and grand-admirals) were the largest group of patrons; however, by the middle of the seventeenth century, the number of patrons who were high-ranking military officers and palace *ağa*s (chief eunuchs of the imperial harem) gradually began to gain importance as patrons. By the eighteenth century, patronage by the military class had extended down to the lower ranks, and, as a group, *ağa*s accounted for almost a third of all building patrons.[159] Instead of an all-powerful, single imperial household responsible for directing the artistic patronage of the ruling class, a few elite households could also partly partake of this power, which was infact contested by rival factions.[160] The extension of artistic patronage to the lower ranks of the military created a group of officials who both supported and practised calligraphy in a period when master calligraphers were praised by poets and regular calligraphic gatherings were the subject of court chroniclers.

The increasing power of the *paşa* and vizier households in this period played a crucial role in the birth of different calligraphic formats and forms of representation. These households established an alternative to royal patronage by promoting a number of unemployed calligraphers.[161] Linked to this new group of patrons were a number of innovative calligraphic formats, including: the lavishly illustrated *Delāil al-Khayrat* manuscripts, portable *hilye* panels, and poetic border inscriptions in

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[159] Hamadeh, (2004), p.78
[160] Findley, (2006), p.66
[161] Further information on the formation of *vizier* and *Paşa* households can be found in Rifaat Ali Abou-El-Hajj's article; 'The Ottoman Vezir and Paşa Households 1683-1703: A Priliminary Report' [*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol.94, No.4 (Oct-Dec. 1974), pp.438-447]

nasta'līq script designed as decoration for seaside mansions. Calligraphers enjoyed the generous support of the wealthy vizier and *mufti* households, considered as a "slave aristocracy".[162] The famous Hāfız Osman Efendi (d.1689), for instance, was brought up and educated under the supervision of Köprülüzāde Mustafa Paşa (d.1691), a powerful member of the Köprülü vizier household.[163]

By the second half of the seventeenth century, outstanding viziers and *mufti*s were gaining more power in the palace and by the eighteenth century their households had become more powerful than that of the royal family.[164] Marriage alliances between members of the Ottoman dynasty and *vizier* households, including the Köprülü, as well as with *mufti* households, such as that of Feyzullah-Efendi, played an important role in this occurence.[165] In addition, the appointment of artists to administrative posts became routine at the Ottoman court. In other words, military men and bureaucrats who were also considered to be artists were numerous among the palace personnel; this was most notable among court architects in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[166]

These changes also meant that by the second half of the seventeenth century, the increasing importance and efficiency of the bureaucracy created a wealthy class of scribes, who now as officials supported calligraphic activities. Scribes from different levels of the administration, including chancery scribes (*divan kātipleri*), office scribes (*kalem halī feleri*), secretaries of the grand-vizier (*tezkireciler*) and chief secretaries (*mektubī ler*), all supported by members of the *vizier* and *mufti* households, established a "school of palatial scribes". Many scribes, now working as official calligraphers, advanced to higher positions, including the rank of finance minister (*defterdār*), treasurer (*kesedār*), head of the office issuing *fatwa*s (*fetva emī ni*) and sometimes even vizier and grand-vizier.

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[162] This expression was first used by Doğan Kuban, in his *Ottoman Architecture* [*Osmanlı Mimarisi*, Y.E.M., Istanbul, 2007].
[163] Dere, (2009), p.95
[164] Among these families, the *vizier* household of the Köprülüs and the *mufti* one of Feyzullah-zādes were in power throughout the eighteenth century and influenced other governmental households. For further discussion see: Madeline C. Zilfi, 'Elite Circulation in the Ottoman Empire: Great Mollas of the Eighteenth Century'[*Journal of the Economy and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. XXVI, Part III]
[165] Finkel, (2005), p.329
[166] Artan, (2006), p.412

The number of high ranking officials who practised calligraphy professionally began to visibly increase in the late seventeenth century. High-ranking calligrapher officials holding office during the reign of Sultan Mustafa II, as recorded in biographical resources, include İbrahim Paşa,[167] the sword-bearer of Mustafa II (*silahdār*), and the sons of Rāmī Mehmed Paşa, Abdurrahman Paşa and Abdullah Paşa.[168].

During Ahmed III's reign, the practice of calligraphy appears to have become practically a necessity for advancing to a higher rank within the court heirarchy. Ismail Efendi,[169] the secretary of the *Darüssaāde Ağası* Hacı Beşī r Agha, Ahmed Efendi,[170] the secretary of finance (*maliye kalemi hulefasından*), Emīnī Mehmed Bey,[171] the chancery scribe (*divan katibi*), Rahmī Mustafa Efendi,[172] the seal-bearer (*mühürdar*) of Dāmād İbrahim Paşa, and Veliyüddīn Efendi,[173] the chief judge of Egypt (*Mısır kadısı*), were all celebrated calligraphers. Sālim Mehmed Efendi, the minister of finance in Baghdad (*Bağdad defterdarı*), Abdülbāki Arif Efendi,[174] the chief military judge (*Rumeli Kazaskeri*), Hamīdīzāde Hasan Efendi,[175] the chief judge of Egypt (*Mısır kadısı*), and many others formed the calligraphy circle of Ahmed III`s court. In this period the Topkapı Palace could be considered a palace of calligraphers. There were even calligraphers among the door-keepers of the Topkapı, such as Horoz Ahmed Efendi.[176] In some cases the teacher and the student were both courtly officials. For instance, Abdülbākī Efendi, the chief-judge of Damascus (*Şam Mollası*) under Ahmed III, studied calligraphy under the supervision of Bahrī Mehmed Paşa, the governor of Cyprus (*Kıbrıs Valisi*).[177]

In this period the practise of calligraphy became part of the image of the upper-class, especially among the bureaucratic circles promoted by powerful vizier and mufti

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[167] Suyolcuzāde, (1942), p.15
[168] Ibid, p.88
The names that have been selected by Rāmī Mehmed Paşa for naming his sons, "Abdurrahmān" and "Abdullāh" actually indicate his insight in the sicence of *hadith*. It has been noted that Prophet Muhammad has said: "God is most pleased with two names; Abdullāh and Abdurrahmān".
[169] Rado, (1980), p.12
[170] Ibid, p.18
[171] Ibid, p.19
[172] Ibid, p.56
[173] Ibid, p.18
[174] Ibid, p.24
[175] Ibid, p.41
[176] Ibid, p.48
[177] Ibid, pp.24, 131

households. Leading stately figures began to be praised as "possessor of pen and sword" (*seyf ü kalem sāhibi*).[178] The eighteenth-century calligrapher and scholar Suyolcu-zāde Mehmed Necīb Efendi (d.1757), in his biographies of calligraphers, *Devhatü'l Küttāb*, used this expression in praise of many members of the ruling class.

Obviously imitating Ahmed III's calligraphic circle, many members of the court became involved in, or at least interested in, calligraphy. Under Ahmed III, the number of high ranking officials who practised calligraphy professionally increased.

Unlike professional calligraphers who earned their living through practicing their art, many members of the upper-class who were also practicioners had other occupations. High ranking calligrapher-officials under Ahmed III, as recorded in biographic resources, include: İzzet Ali Paşa;[179] the grand-vizier Dāmād İbrahim Paşa;[180] the grand-vizier Kaymakzāde Mustafa Paşa;[181] the grand-vizier, Hāfız Hasan Efendi;[182] the son-in-law of Dāmād İbrahim Paşa, Toz-kondurmaz Mustafa Agha;[183] the private secretary of Ahmed III, Ahmed Beg;[184] the stirrup-holder (*rikabdār*) of Ahmed III; and Ebu-bekir Efendi,[185] the lackey (*çuhadār*) of Ahmed III. The following individuals were celebrated calligraphers as well: Çelebizāde Asım İsmail Efendi;[186] the chronicler of Ahmed III, Tabib Hasan Efendi;[187] the chief physician (*tabib*) of Ahmed III, Çinicizāde Abdurrahman Efendi;[188] the *mawlid*-reciter (*mevlidhān*) of Ahmed III, Anbārī Mehmed Efendi,[189] the minister of foreign affairs (*reisü'l-küttāb*); and Levhī Hāfız Mehmed Efendi,[190] the coffee-server of Ahmed III's sister Hadice Sultan.

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[178] Suyolcuzāde, (1942), p.90
[179] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.88
[180] Rado, (1980), p.134
[181] Suyolcuzāde, (1942), p.128
[182] Ibid, p.38
[183] Ibid, p.27 [Tozkondurmaz Mustafa Ağa was not only a calligrapher but also one of the leading illuminators of the imperial scriptorium who illuminated many calligraphic albums and panels of Ahmed III. See; Rado, (1980), p.134]
[184] Ibid, p.14
[185] Ibid, p.14
[186] Ibid, p.33
[187] Ibid, p.78
[188] Ibid, p.31
[189] Ibid, p.129
[190] Ibid, 115

The Grand-vizier Dāmād İbrahim Paşa practised calligraphy under the supervision of Hāfız Osman, the tutor of the royal princes, while he was a member of the *saray baltacıları* (young officers attendant at the palace). Following the death of Hāfız Osman, he continued his studies with Ressam Ömer Efendi (d. 1717), another tutor of the young royals, and acquired a calligraphy diploma (*icazetnāme*).[191] İbrahim Paşa's son Mehmed Paşa[192] and his son-in-law, the Grand Admiral Kaymak Mustafa Paşa,[193] are also among notable members of the ruling class who practiced calligraphy.

In eighteenth-century İstanbul, even ordinary scribes were well-respected as being literate had a prestige of its own. Calligraphers were well-supported and scribes well-paid. It was no coincidence that the calligraphy profession became more and more prestigious by the early eighteenth century. Sheila Blair notes that 'the usually reliable Bolognese scholar Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli, who was captured by the Ottomans, sold to a Paşa and redeemed in 1682, estimated that there were 80-90,000 copyists working in İstanbul'.[194]

The writings of eighteenth century Ottoman court calligraphers show that they considered the quality of, and insight into, calligraphy of their own time to be unparalleled. This fact can be observed from historical anecdotes such as the preparation of decrees in various calligraphic styles to be sent to the *Shah* of Persia. As noted by the chronicler Rāshid Efendi, in the year of 1721; "… when the Persian ambassador Murtaza Kuli *Hān* was about to leave İstanbul, the *firman* which would be sent to the *Shah* was prepared by three different calligraphers; Firdevsī Al-sayyid Hüseyin Efendi, Bursalı Hezarfen Mehmed Efendi and Veliyüddīn Efendi".[195] Firdevsī Hüseyin Efendi inscribed *Quranic* verses in the style of *jalī*, Bursalı Mehmed Efendi penned Persian couplets in the *tawqii* style, and Veliyüddīn Efendi composed the rest of the text in *nasta'līq*.[196]

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[191] Rado, (1980), p.134
[192] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.375
[193] Ibid, (1928), p.540
[194] Blair, (2006), p.479
[195] Rāşid, (1865), p.426
[196] Ibid, p.427

In their reports on the diplomatic visits of Persian envoys, Ottoman court chroniclers often recorded conversations which were part of an entertainment ceremony in which the two parties exchanged poetic, musical, and calligraphic skills through various displays of talent that were seemingly highly competitive in spirit.[197] For instance, Rāşid Efendi described a meeting between the Persian ambassador, Murtaza Kuli *Hān*, and the circle of Ottoman calligraphers in İstanbul in 1721.[198] According to him, "...Persian ambassador Murtaza Kuli *Hān*, much proud of the calligraphic skills of Persian scribes, showed a fake folio in *nas-ta'līq*, bearing the signature of 'Imād[199] to *Defter-emīni*[200] Mehmed Efendi to test his knowledge. Mehmed Efendi and the circle of calligraphers around him viewed the work carefully and came to the conclusion that it was a fake. The ambassador was very surprised. Afterwards, the Grand-Vizier, İbrahim Paşa, asked him to view the *nasta'līq* works of Ottoman calligraphers. Murtaza Kuli *Hān* viewed various works with astonishment. Among all, he decided that the works of Veliyüddīn Efendi were the best. Therefore, he named him *'Imād al-Rūm* (*'Imād of Anatolia*) and he celebrated all other scribes he met".[201] Here, the presence and close attention of the Grand-Vizier and his concern regarding the ambassador's opinion show the significance of calligraphy in the eyes of the Ottoman elite.

Court calligraphers were sent to the provinces to copy rare manuscripts that had been donated to mausoleums of leading religious figures. The calligrapher Mehmed Şekerzāde, for instance, was sent to Medina on the order of Ahmed III to produce a copy of a *Qur'an* manuscript originally transcribed by Şeyh Hamdullah in the tomb of the Prophet.[202] The Sultan was also concerned with commissioning new inscriptions for the leading holy buildings of Islam. Sālih Çelebi notes that on his journey to Mecca, he composed the inscription above the entrance of the Holy Ka'ba on the order of Ahmed III.[203]

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[197] Hamadeh, (2004), p.232
[198] Ibid, p.416
[199] 'Imād al-Hasanī (d.1615), was one of the most famous calligraphers of Iran, known as a great master of the style of *ta'liq*.
[200] *Defter-emini*: Director of the registry of landed properties.
[201] Raşid, (1865), p.417
[202] Suyolcuzāde, (1942), p.68 This *Qur'an* manuscript, copied by Şeker-zāde Mehmed Efendi, is in the Süleymaniye Library (Yeni Camii No.3). [See; Derman (1988), p.73]
[203] Ibid, p.74

İbrahim Paşa, a renowned patron of calligraphy, supported these practioners generously. In many sources he has himself been noted as a calligrapher. He studied calligraphy under the supervision of Hāfız Osman, the Sultan's teacher, and, following his teacher's death, received his calligraphy-diploma (*icāzetnāme*) from Ressam Ömer Efendi.[204] It is interesting to note that many historians, while paying attention to his calligraphic skills, have ignored his insight into music and literature. Conversely, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, an eye-witness of the period, noted that; "İbrahim Paşa is a man of wit and learning, but whether or not he is capable of writing good verse himself... you may be sure that he would not want the assistance of the best poets in the empire."[205] It is evident that İbrahim Paşa was a man of many artistic leanings, although not all were fully recognised on a consistent basis. The chronicler Destārī Sālih Efendi has also noted that İbrahim Paşa was extremely proud and sometimes even arrogant.[206]

The so-called 'Dāmād İbrahim Paşa Album' (Fig.1), written in *thuluth* and *naskh*, in 1718 by Yedikuleli Seyyid Abdullah, is an outstanding example presented to Dāmād İbrahim Paşa. The last page of the album bears the seal of the Grand-Vizier and a record in *naskh* that reads; 'This is the album presented to Dāmād İbrahim Paşa, Annum 1131'.

Fig.1: The Calligraphic Album which was Presented to Dāmād İbrahim Paşa, Signed by Yedikuleli Seyyid Abdullah Efendi (d.1731), Private Collection, İstanbul.

The calligraphic panel in *naskh* script (Fig.2), in the Tanman Family Collection in İstanbul, is the only panel that bears a dedicatory inscription with the name of

[204] Rado, (1980), p.134
[205] Montagu, (1988), p.116
[206] Destārī, (1962), p.2

Ahmed III. The date 1115AH (1703AD) indicates that it was inscribed in the first year of the Sultan's reign. As revealed by its text, the *Nādi 'Aliyyan*[207] prayer, it was possibly presented to the Sultan following his accession.

Fig.2: Calligraphic Panel Presented to Sultan Ahmed III, Dated 1115A.H (1703A.D)

Scholarly Treatises on Calligraphy:

In Islamic sources calligraphy has been regarded primarily as a science (*'ilm*) rather than an art. Sultan Ahmed asked leading calligraphers to write treatises on the history and techniques of calligraphy. He must have considered himself not just a calligraphy student while traditionally practising with a master in his youth, but also as a future specialist of calligraphy as an individual science, *'ilm-i kẖatt'* (science of calligraphy).

Müstakimzāde Süleymān Saadeddīn Efendi, in his *Tuḥfe-i Hattatīn*, defines the scientific aspect of calligraphy and notes; "... scribes and calligraphers must be included to the class of scholars (*'ulema*) since the saying *'allama bi al-qalam* indicates calligraphy's nature of science in addition to its nature of art".[208] Sultans

[207] The prayer reads; Nādi 'Aliyyan maẓ har al-'ajāib – Tajidhu 'awnanlaka fi al-nawāib – Kulli hummun wa ghammun sayanjali – Bi wilāyatika yā 'Ali yā 'Ali yā 'Ali (Call unto 'Ali him that reveals wonders... - Thou shalt find him helper in your difficulties - All grief and sorrow shall be removed – Through thy divine grace 'Ali 'Ali 'Ali!)

[208] Müstakimzāde, 1928, p. 601 [The Arabic expression *'allama bi al-qalam* is a quotation from the *Qur'an*. See, XCVI/4]

who were interested in the art of calligraphy commissioned bibliographic studies on the lives of famous calligraphers and works defining the golden proportions of different calligraphic styles. For instance, one of the leading sources on calligrapher bibliographies, *Menākıb-ı Hünerverān* by Gelibolulu Ali, was dedicated to Sultan Murād III.

Among the Ottoman sultans, Ahmed III played a crucial role as a patron of treatises on the art of calligraphy (*'ilm-i khatt*). A fine copy of Mehmed b. Tācuddīn's *Tac-zāde Risalesi* (TKSK-R1505), copied by *Küçük* Ali *'an Kātibān-i Māliye* (Ali the younger of the finance office), in 1119AH/1707AD is one of these.[209] The expression used in its colophon in relation to scribes (*kātibān*), indicates that in addition to their secretarial work, they were employed in the service of the palace library. This indicates an institutional integration between scholars, men of the pen and bureaucrats and is therefore an important aspect of the production of calligraphy under Ahmed III.

Prior to Ahmed's reign, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, perhaps due to their varied responsibilities, court scribes were not involved in manuscript production. There was only a small group of calligraphers who earned a living by solely practising calligraphy. According to Soucek, this was possibly due to the large numbers of *Qur'an* manuscripts imported into İstanbul from the city of Shiraz in the sixteenth century.[210] In the sixteenth century Shiraz was one of the main centres of manuscript production and the Ottoman elite, until the seventeenth century, used to collect Persian manuscripts. By the early eignteenth century, however, local production of *Qur'an*s and other manuscripts increased and there was a correspoinding decrease in the importation of Persian, especially Shirazi, manuscripts.

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[209] Irwin Cemil Schick, in his article on the Tac-zade Risalesi, sheds light on the technical terms used for defining the *thuluth* script, discussed in this highly important work. [See; Schick, I. Cemil. 'Tac-zade Risalesi'ne Göre Sülüs Hattına Dair Bazı Istılahat', *Uğur Derman Armağanı / Derman Festschrift*, Sabancı University, Istanbul, 2000, pp.457-83.]

[210] Soucek, (2001), p.296

A beautifully written copy of Nefes-zade Ismail Efendi's *Mī zān al-Khatt 'ala Vaḍ' al-Ustād al-Salaf*[211], in the Ali Emīrī Manuscript Library, copied by Ismail Zühdī Efendi in 1724, is among the commissions of Ahmed III.[212] *Mī zān al-Khatt* is one of the most significant resources of calligraphy, focusing on the technical peculiarities of letters in various styles, particularly *thuluth* and *muhaqqaq*. The quantity of such courtly commissions on 'the science of calligraphy' indicates the increased interest at the time in the technicalities of calligraphy. Another interesting manuscript on '*ilm-i khatt*, produced under Ahmed III for courtly use, is *Trashī dan-e Qalam wa Uṣ ūl al-Khatt* (*How to Cut Pen and Basics of Calligraphy*), copied by İbrahim Nāmık in 1728.[213]

Born in 1719, Müstakimzāde Süleyman Sa'deddīn Efendi, one of the leading scholars of the eighteenth century, grew up in the cultural atmosphere created by Ahmed III. It was not by coincidence that he compiled his *Tuḥfe-i Hattātī n* (*The Biographies of Calligraphers*) in this atmosphere, a work which has been regarded as the most important Turkish resource on calligraphy. The eighteenth century was the golden age of treatises on '*ilm-i khatt* (the Science of Calligraphy), a direct result of an increasing interest and importance being placed on calligraphy at this time. As a result, the production of this scientific documentation, which had previously hardly been available, flourished. Many other scientific works on calligraphy were executed during and just after the reign of Ahmed III. The *Dawhat al-Kuttāb*, by Suyolcuzāde Mehmed Necī b Efendi, for instance, was completed in 1737, just seven years after the dethronement of the Sultan. Unlike Müstakimzāde's work, the *Dawhat al-Kuttāb* was written as a compendium following the *Menākıb-ı Hünerverān* of Gelibolulu Mustafa Āli. This, therefore, shows that an effort was made to write works that complemented previous academic works on calligraphy.

A serious manuscript restoration program was sponsored by Ahmed III, which included not only the imperial libraries and the royal manuscript collections in İstanbul, but also provincial collections in numerous pious complexes. For instance, there is evidence of this conservation in Jerusalem. A text in mashaf no:7 in the

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[211] MK. Ali Emīrī Section: T.812/2
[212] Derman, (2007), p.350
[213] Ibid, p.351

manuscript collection of *al-Haram al-Sharif* Islamic Art Museum in Madina, records that the governor of Jerusalem, Hajj Mustafa Paşa, who was appointed by Sultan Ahmed III, visited the Dome of the Rock in 1705.[214] He found that many manuscripts endowed by earlier rulers were in poor condition and so ordered the restoration of 27 manuscripts, including the replacement of their missing pages.

II.2.The Calligrapher Sultan and the Sultan of Calligraphers: Sultan Ahmed III and Hāfız Osman Efendi (D.1698)

What kind of a social and cultural atmosphere transformed an Ottoman prince into a master calligrapher who was responsible for the establishment of a new *genre*? This question forces us to focus on the nature of the princely education Ahmed III received. Calligraphy, poetry, music, carpentry and seal-engraving were leading princely arts of the Ottoman court, as well as all traditional Muslim courts. His brother Mustafa II's passion and love for calligraphy must have influenced Ahmed III, but there was more to his fascination with calligraphy than that. It was a result of the increasing, unquestionable priority given to calligraphy in the Imperial Enderun School.

Ahmed III had the privilege of becoming the pupil of one of the last great masters of Ottoman calligraphy, Hāfız Osman (d.1698). As his nickname "*Şeyh -i thāni*" (the second Şeyh) indicates, Hāfız Osman was regarded as the second great master of Ottoman calligraphy, following the first Şeyh, Şeyh Hamdullah (d.1526).[215] As a student of Hāfız Osman, Ahmed III became part of a prestigious master-student chain of the transmission of calligraphy, stretching, through Şeyh Hamdullah and Yāqut al-Musta'simī, [216] back to Caliph 'Ali, who is traditionally accepted as the

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[214] The *Qur'an* Manuscripts in the al-Haram al-Sharif Islamic Museum, (2001), p.31
[215] Schimmel, (1984), p.24; Derman, (1967), p.8
[216] Traditionally, history of calligraphy has been described as a path (*tariqa*) or chain (*silsila*) that passed from master (*ustad*, *pir* or *sheikh*) to pupil (*shagird* or *murīd*). (See: Blair, 2007, p.241) The master-student chain from Caliph 'Ali down to Sultan Ahmed III is as follows: Caliph Ali – Hasan al-Basri – Ishak b. Jamāl – Ibrahim Sajarī – Ihwāl – Muhammad b. Muqlah – Hasan al-Marzabanī – Muhammad b. As'ad – Abd al-Mu'mīn – Yaqut al-Musta'sīmī – Al-Sayyid Haydar – 'Abdallah al-Sayrafī – Khayr al-Dīn Mar'ashī – Sheikh Hamdullah – Mustafa Dede – Derviş Muhammed – Hasan al-Üsküdārī – Nefeszāde Seyyid Ismail – Hāfız Osman – Ahmed III. [See: Mehmed Hafid, (1818), p.336]

founder of Islamic calligraphy.[217] Praising the righteous caliphs as the founding fathers of islamic calligraphy is commonly observed in scholarly works compiled on the history of calligraphy such as Müstakimzāde's *Silsiletü'l Hattātīn* (calligraphers' chain of transmission) stretching back to the righteous caliphs.[218] The two Qur'an manuscripts supposedly copied by Caliph 'Ali and Caliph 'Uthman, at the top of the list of Ahmed III's library, indicate the Sultan's personal interest in this historical link, both as a caliph and calligrapher.[219]

Müstakimzāde also perpetuates this legend in his work *Tuhfe-i Hattātīn,* but in the prologue of this work he also remarks that the Prophet himself, despite being outwardly illiterate (*ummī*), was truly the lord of the well-preserved tablet (*lawḥ-i mahfūz*) and the celestial pen (*qalam*),[220] meaning that the essence of the Prophet was present during the divine inscription of the well–preserved tablet, thus associating the awareness of the Prophet with the eternal nature of the calligraphy on the tablet. In Ottoman sources on calligraphy there are many statements confirming Müstakimzāde's view. The famous sixteenth-century Ottoman historian, Mustafa Āli Gelibolulu, in his *Menākıb-ı Hünerverān*, refers to the *Surat al-'Alaq*, verse 1: "Read! In the name of your Lord who created: He created man from a clinging form. Read! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One who taught by (means of) the pen"[221] and remarks that the Prophet, who may not have been literate in life, was the one "who had the honour of receiving the divine command" of Read! from God; therefore, Mustafa Āli considers that the Prophet "is the master of the well-preserved tablet and the pen".[222] In this traditional interpretation, Prophet Muhammad is regarded as the spiritual founder of Islamic calligraphy and thus calligraphers, including Ahmed III, consequently served this highest of art forms which was considered to have been founded by the spirit of the Prophet.

Ahmed III`s teacher, Hāfız Osman, was also celebrated for inventing a new calligraphic form, the '*hilyeh*-panel,' and for refining the 'classical' *naskh* of Şeyh

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[217] For further discussion on Caliph 'Ali's mastery in calligraphy See; Schimmel, (1984), p.3
[218] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.62
[219] Quran section signed 'Uthman b. Affan (TSML A.1) and Quran manuscript signed 'Ali b. Abi-Talib (TSML A.1). See: Karatay I, (1966), pp.1-2.
[220] Ibid, p.21
[221] The *Qur'an*, Surat al-'Alaq (1-5).
[222] Mustafa Âli, (1926), p.5

Hamdullah, which immensely influenced Ahmed III's art . The *hilyeh*-panel comprised a brand new calligraphic format on its own;[223] however, Ahmed III never designed one. Hāfız Osman also established his school of *naskh,* still studied today by modern Turkish calligraphers. Sheila Blair, in her *Islamic Calligraphy*, suggests that, 'just as Hāfız Osman has learned his style of *naskh* by copying works by his predecessor Şeyh Hamdullah, so later Ottoman calligraphers copied the format and style of works by Hāfız Osman. His hand was the model not only for manuscripts, but also for the earliest printing by the Muslims'.[224] Sermet Muhtar Alus, a well-known early twentieth-century folk-historian, records that *Qur'an* manuscripts transcribed by Hāfız Osman were among the most prestigious royal gifts given to the members of the upper-class by the nineteenth century Ottoman court.[225]

Hāfız Osman was the son of the *müezzin* of the Haseki Sultan Mosque, Ali Efendi.[226] He was brought up and trained under the supervision of Köprülü-zāde Mustafa Paşa (d.1691), a powerful member of the Köprülü vizier household. As understood from his title *hāfiz*, he recited the Quran by heart, which he had memorized as part of the classical education he received. According to Ali Alparslan, he started to practise calligraphy with Derviş Ali the elder (d.1673) in 1656.[227]

After learning the basics of calligraphy from Derviş Ali, Hāfız Osman studied under the supervision of one of Derviş Ali's favourite students, Suyolcu-zāde Mustafa Eyyūbī Efendi (d.1686). Although he received his diploma (*icāzetnāme*)[228] from Suyolcu-zāde by the time he was eighteen, Hāfız Osman still sought guidance through higher artistic education.[229] Therefore, he re-started his studies under Nefes-zāde Seyyid Ismail Efendi (d.1679), celebrated for his unparalleled skills in imitating the style of Şeyh Hamdullah in six pens (*Aqlām-i sittah* or *shash qalam*).[230] Nefes-

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[223] Since its invention by Hāfız Osman, the *hilyeh*-panel became the most important sign of commemorating the Prophet. The *hilyeh*-panel found its way into mosques, houses and shops. [Tüfekçioğlu A. Osmanlı Döneminde Hat Sanatı, *Osmanlı*, Vol:XI, (1994), p.46-47] For further discussion see; Derman, (1979), pp.33-38.
[224] Blair, (2006), p.485-86
[225] Alus, (2001), p.27
[226] Çığ, (1949), p.5
[227] The so-called 'Büyük Derviş Ali'. [See, Alparslan, (1999), p.64]
[228] Icazet-name tr, ijazah ar.
[229] Çığ, (1949), p.6
[230] The six main calligraphic styles, '*muhaqqaq, thuluth, naskh, kufi, tawqi', rikaa'*, established by Yāqūt al-Musta'simī (d.1298).

zāde Ismail, the brother of calligrapher Nefes-zāde Seyyid Ibrāhim (d.1650), was the author of *Gülzār-ı Sevāb*, an outstanding biographical study on the lives of famous calligraphers which included recipies of various inks. Undoubtedly, Nefes-zāde Ismail and İbrahim's works, both scientific and practical, influenced the practical and theoretical aspects of Hāfız Osman's art. However, Hāfız Osman considered his real master to be Suyolcuzāde Mustafa Eyyūbī. As recorded by Müstakimzāde, when his calligraphic education was questioned by the Grand-vizier Köprülüzāde Mustafa Paşa, Hāfız Osman mentioned Suyolcu-zāde Mustafa Eyyūbī as his teacher and not Nefes-zāde Seyyid Ismail.[231]

According to Müstakim-zāde, Harīrīzāde Mustafa Efendi was also one of the teachers of Hāfız Osman. Harīrīzāde has been overlooked in other sources and little is known about him. Müstākimzāde's 'master-pupil chain' (*silsile*) from Hāfız Osman back to Sheiykh Hamdullah is as follows: 'Hāfız Osman's master was Harîrî-zâde Mustafa Efendi, and his master was Derviş Ali, and his master was Hālid-i Erzurūmī, and his master was Hasan Üsküdārī, and his master was Pīr Muhammed Dede, and his master was Şeyh Hamdullah's son-in-law Şükrullah Halīfe, and his master was Şeyh Hamdullah'.[232]

Hāfız Osman was a member of the Sünbüliye *sufi* order, founded by Sünbül Sinan Efendi (d.1529), centred in a dervish-lodge in the district of Koca-Mustafa Paşa in İstanbul.[233] He was spiritually attached to Şeyh Seyyid Alāeddin Efendi, the keeper of the Sünbül Efendi dervish-lodge.[234] Some scholars have suggested that the

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[231] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.302, Also see; Dere, (2009), pp.95-109.

[232] Müstakimzāde, (1838), p.483 "Şeyhu'l-Merāsim nām-daşı Ebu'l-Kāsım Ebū Reşīd Mevlānā Hāce Muhammed Rāsim Efendi, Yedikuleli Seyyid Abdullâh Efendi'den 1144/(1731)'te, o da Hāfız Osmān'dan 1115/(1703)'te, o da Harīrī-zāde Mustafa Efendi'den 1095/(1684)'te, o da Derviş Ali'den 1084/(1673)'te, o da Hālid-i Erzurūmī'den, o da Hasan-ı Üsküdārī'den 1023/(1614)'te, o da Pīr Muhammed Dede'den, o da Şeyh Hamdullah dāmādı Şükrullâh Halīfe'den, o da kıbletü'l-küttāb Şeyh Hamdullah merhūmdan ahz-ı icāzeye muvaffak olmuştur."

[233] 'The Sünbüliye order had been attracting members of the court and upper class since Selīm I. It has been noted that Selīm himself used to visit the dervish-lodge of Sünbül Efendi for private conversations on religious matters.' [Reşat Özgören, *Osmanlılarda Tasavvuf – Anadolu'da Sufiler – Devlet ve Ulema*, Iz, Istanbul, 2003, p.245-310] The Sünbülī Dervish-lodge in the district of Mustafa Paşa housed many calligraphers and transcribers. This lodge has been stated as a transcribing centre in colophons of a number of manuscripts. [Fehmi Edhem Karatay, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts in the Topkapı Palace Library*, Vol:IV, (1969), p.91 Env.H.1680]

[234] Çığ, (1949), p.6

superiority of his works could be related to the calligraphic tradition of the *Sünbüliye* order.[235]

By the end of the year 1694, Hāfız Osman was appointed as the calligraphy teacher of Sultan Mustafa II (r.1695-1703), Ahmed III`s brother.[236] The memory of Mustafa II's loyalty to his teacher has been kept alive with a famous anecdote told among scribes even today. When Mustafa II, who did not mind holding the inkstand for his teacher, once remarked: 'Never will there be another Hāfız Osman!' the calligrapher replied: 'Your Majesty, as long as there are kings that hold the inkstand for their teachers, there will be many more Hāfız Osmans'.[237] Mustafa II also exhibited his regard for his teacher by granting him the income of the district of Filibe (Philippopolis) and an honorary rank of a judge (*mevleviyet*).[238] Perhaps this was the precise moment in which the granting of honorary bureaucratic ranks to master calligraphers began. Copying Hāfız Osman played an important role in Mustafa II's artistic career. Müstakimzāde says that whenever Mustafa II wished to compose calligraphy, he first asked Hāfız Osman to write it and then he copied it from his teacher's draft.[239]

Hāfız Osman`s mastery in calligraphy, particularly in *naskh,* brought him immortal fame. Schimmel, in the mid-twentieth century, stated that, 'the *Qur'an* as written by Hāfız Osman is still the ideal for every art-loving, pious Turk, who would certainly agree with the chronogram marking his death:

'To serve the word of God, day and night

The Almighty had granted him (Hāfız Osman) *yad-i tulā* (special power)'[240]

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[235] Schimmel, (1984), p.74
[236] Vassaf, (2005), Vol:III, p.314
[237] Schimmel, (1984), p.74 A similar event has been recorded between Shah Abbas I (1588-1629) and Ali Rizā Abbāsī. On one occasion, Shah Abbas I is said to have held the candle while his favourite calligrapher Ali Rizā Abbāsī was at work. [Savory, (2007), p.131]
[238] Suyolcuzāde, (1942), p. 37
[239] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.302. [Also see; Çığ, (1949), p.6]
[240] Ibid, p.74

Hāfız Osman was a great master of the *qit'a* format, which refers to an album page composed horizontally, with one line of *thuluth* script at the top and several lines of *naskh* script arranged beneath. Immediately after Şeyh Hamdullah's demise, it became a common desire amongst Ottoman calligraphers to copy all aspects of his style, including attempting to write just like him, applying his scale of proportions and even imitating his works,[241] a trend also followed by the young Hāfız Osman. Rado notes that "everyone admired Hāfız Osman's gift in replicating Şeyh Hamdullah`s hand".[242]

In one of his calligraphic albums,[243] Hāfız Osman explained his search for a new 'style' and Şeyh Hamdullah's influence on his works. The text reads, "You! The one who is viewing my calligraphy with a real vision and fairness... May God have mercy on you, thousands and thousands of times. Be certain that, I was not able to live in the days of the divinely-gifted Hamdullah, the so-called İbnü'ş-Şeyh. I did not have the chance to visit the dust of his feet and see how he used to teach this beautiful art. I could not have the honor of studying under his supervision. However, I collected and studied many of his album pages and I felt compelled to make adaptations from them. I studied day and night. With the divine aid of the all-knowing and most powerful God, I reached my present level of competence. I constantly pray to be elevated to higher levels of perfection in this art. Since my studies took place in my youth... Now, the time has come for further progress. The weakest among the servants of God, Osman, the less appropriate for the title *Hāfız*".[244]

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[241] 'Indeed Hāfız Osman himself was copying and imitating the style of Sheikh Hamdullah. However, he copied the letters he liked and he matured and beautified the letter that still had a Yaqutian manner. For this reason Sheikh Hamdullah must be regarded as the opening of the classical period in Ottoman calligraphy and Hāfız Osman the climax point.' [Tüfekçioğlu, A. 'Osmanlı Döneminde Hat Sanatı', *Osmanlı*, Vol:XI, 1994, pp.46,47]

[242] Rado, (1980), p.109

[243] TKSMK,E.H.2213

[244] The Arabic word *Hāfız* primarily means 'protector'. Here it has been used as a title meaning 'the one who knows the *Qur'an* by heart.' The original text in Arabic reads; "*Yā man nazara li khattī ḥaqqa al-nazari wa al-inṣāf raḥimaka allāhu raḥmatan mutaāwizatan min al-alfi ila al-ālāf ta'lamu innī lam abluġ zamāna ḥamdullāhu al-muštahir bi Ibn al-Shaykh allazi huwa maẕ har al-ilāhi wa mā raaytu ta'limahu bi-mulāzamati turāb-i aqdāmihi wa māniltu hāzihi'l martabati bi-tarbiyyatihi wa aqdāmihi wa lākin hama'tu min khattihi al-latīfi qit'aan katīran wa kuntu fī mutālaatihā wa naqlihā asīran wa sa'aytu fī al-layāli wa al-ayyām wa balaġtu hāzā al-manzil bi-'ināyati al-malik al-'allām wa arcū min allāhi al-karīm bi al-himami al-kāmilati anna anāla mānāla min al-qadri wa al-manzilati li anna hāzā al-saa waqaa fī zamān al-shabābi wa hāzā al-zamānu*

Innovations and development of calligraphic styles, by practicing calligraphers, was always linked to an insightful analysis of works by earlier masters. For example, Şeyh Hamdullah, before establishing his own style, spent most of his time examining the works of the Abbasid calligrapher Yaqūt al-Musta'sımī (d.1298).[245] Hāfız Osman's above-mentioned efforts of adaption belong to the same tradition; his adoration of Şeyh Hamdullah's works can even be observed in his signature. Colophons by Hāfız Osman occasionally read, 'copied after the hand of Şeyh Hamdullah, may God have mercy on him'.[246] This legend appears in the final *juz'* of a thirty-part *Qur'an* copied in 1099/1687-88.[247]

Master calligraphers of the late seventeenth century, such as Ağakapılı Ismail Efendi (d.1706), admired Hāfız Osman's works. According to Müstakim-zāde, Master Ağakapılı Ismail Efendi once expressed his admiration in the following words: 'We learned calligraphy but our lord Hāfız Osman is the one who practised it'.[248] He was not only famous for his skilful hand in calligraphy but also for his good conduct. Safwat records that "Although he was the teacher of the Ottoman princes, he would sit down on a street corner and help a student who had missed his class with his *mashq* (calligraphic exercise)".[249]

Ahmed III was also an admirer of his teacher's calligraphic works, evident in one of his royal commissions. On the Sultan's orders, Şekerzāde Mehmed Efendi, a favourite pupil of Seyyid Abdullah Efendi of Yedikule, produced an exact replica of the *Qur'an*[250] transcribed by Hāfız Osman in 1682. The colophon of the replicated *Qur'an*[251] states that it was commissioned by Sultan Ahmed III and completed in 1729.

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zamān al-taraqqi ilā madārig al-kamāli bi al-irtiyāb aafu 'ibādillāhi wa aqalluhumu al-musammā 'Uthmān al-Ḥāfiz al-Qur'ān." [Dere, 2001, p.28]

[245] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.186

[246] *Nuqila 'an khatt hamdallah al-shaykh raḥimahu allāh*

[247] Blair, (2006), p.483. [Also see; London, Khalili Collection; Bayani, Contadini and Stanley, *The Decorated Word*, No.22.]

[248] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.302

[249] Safwat, (1996), p.10

[250] IUNEK, Inv. No.A.6549

[251] TIEM, Inv. No.85 Professor Ugur Derman has published the frontispieces of both the *Qur'an* by Hafiz Osman and its copy by Şekerzāde Mehmed Efendi in *Doksan Dokuz Istanbul Mushafi*, (2010), pp.168,169-236,237.

II.3 The Calligraphy Circle of Ahmed III

In the early eighteenth century most of the celebrated calligraphers were full- or part-time employees of the Imperial School (*Enderūn-u Hümāyūn*) in the Topkapı Palace, where courtly arts and Islamic sciences had been taught since its foundation in the 15th century.[252] The *Enderūn* had been the home of the officials engaged in the personal and private service of the Sultan, as well as the palace schools. Many members of the Ottoman ruling bureaucracy were educated and trained in the *Enderūn* and so they had the opportunity to practise a courtly art if they so wished.[253] Once calligraphy officials, for instance, advanced and climbed the steps of bureaucracy, they were appointed as admirals, viziers, and chief-judges. This system thus created a ruling class in which many individuals were familiar with courtly arts, and for this reason many high ranking Ottoman officials were involved in practising, or at least were interested in, one of the courtly arts. Leading masters of courtly arts, employed and/or trained in the *Enderūn* formed a master-student chain of *Enderūnī* artists. For the art of calligraphy, the chain of *Enderūn* artists experienced its golden age in the eighteenth century, particularly under Ahmed III.

Due to the Islamic character of the Ottoman court, calligraphy naturally had a special, primary place and thus formed the most prestigious part of the princely education. Every Ottoman prince was first introduced to the *Qur'an* and texts on science or literature penned in the finest calligraphy by professional calligraphers as the palace library and cells of the imperial school housed masterfully illuminated copies of bound manuscripts on science and literature transcribed by master calligraphers. As a result, no less than 14 out of 36 Ottoman sultans became able calligraphers.[254]

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[252] 'Youths who entered the imperial school were educated under private tutors and mentors called "Ağa" and "Lala". The education was based on the *Qur'an* recitation, Arabic skills, Persian skills and calligraphy. Following this basic education optional courses on music, horse-riding, archery were available.' [Koçu, (1976), p.123-124]

[253] The list of Ottoman courtly schools that provided classes on calligraphy, prepared by Tüfekçioğlu includes; 'Dīvān-ı Hümāyun, Enderūn-i Hümāyūn, Galata Sarayı, Muzika-i Hümāyūn' [Tüfekçioğlu, (1994), p.49]

[254] The following sultans, in chronollogical order, were professionally interested in calligraphy: Murad II (1421-1451), Bayezid II (1481-1512), Murad III (1546-1595), Murad IV (1623-1640), Süleyman II (1642-1691), Mustafa II (1695-1703), Ahmed III (1703-1730), Mustafa III (1757-1774), Selīm III (1761-1808), Mahmud II (1808-1839), Abdülmecid (1839-1861), Abdülaziz (1861-1876). See: Subaşı, "Hattat Osmanlı Padişahları", *Osmanlı*, Vol:XI, 1999, pp:52-60. Subaşı's list does not

As the basis of courtly education, calligraphy played a vital role in transcribing religious texts. Every prince learned how to recite the holy *Qur'an* from *Qur`an* manuscripts copied by outstanding calligraphers.[255] Collections of *hadith*s extolling the importance of the art of calligraphy were compiled in order to encourage members of the upper-class to practice calligraphy and support calligraphers. Among these works, *Darr al-Ṣahāba f* *Hadith al-Khatt wa al-Kitāba* (SK, Esad Efendi: 311) by İbrahim Han *Hadith* includes 40 similar content. Other collections of *hadith*s written in Turkish on the virtues of calligraphy, such as Müstakimzāde Süleyman Saadeddin Efendi's *Ḥuccat al-Khatt al-Ḥasan* (AMK 1631), indicate a well-established Ottoman tradition of collecting *hadith*s is support of calligraphy.[256]

Qur'an verses in praise of the pen and *hadith*s of the Prophet encouraging the practice of beautiful writing lie at the base of this courtly tradition. If one of the courtly arts was to be *primus inter pares*, it was calligraphy. It has been noted that Prophet Muhammad said: *'Alaykum bi-ḥusn al-khatt fa-innahû min mafâtîḥ al-rizq*; "Get involved with calligraphy, it is among the keys of one's daily bread".[257] Another saying, attributable to Caliph 'Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, reads *al-Khatt nisf al-'Ilm* (calligraphy is half of knowledge).[258] Another well-known saying on calligraphy is; *Ḥusn al-khatt lisân al-yad wa bahjat al-ḍamīr*; "calligraphy is a language to hand and a beauty to heart".[259]

Seen as the second half of the act of reading or recitation,[260] writing/calligraphy became part of the image on an ideal ruler. The royal title of *sāhib-i sayf* (owner of

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include Ahmed I (1603-1617) and Ahmed II (1691-1695). A page in *naskh*, copied and signed by Ahmed I is found in his album in the *Topkapı* Palace Library (TSM B.408). A small piece of calligraphy consisting of the *Nādi 'Aliyyan* prayer, copied and signed by Sultan Ahmed II in *naskh* is in the Riza Çebi Collection, Istanbul. A gilt wooden panel signed by Prince Mehmed, future Sultan Mehmed IV (r.1648-1687), was recorded by A. Galland in 1672, but we can not be certain about the exact nature of this work. See: Galland, (1949), vol: I, p. 165.

[255] A special ceremony was held in the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, in the *Topkapı* Palace, following the end of a prince's first recitation of the *Qur'an*. Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, *Nusretnāme*, (1969), p. 388

[256] Derman, (1999), pp.1-39

[257] *Kashf al-Khafâ*, II, s. 71 (1775**)** With regard to the word *mafātih,* which refers to divine inspiration, this hadith could also be translated as; "Get involved with calligraphy, it is among the keys of morality/virtues". Dr. Nedim Tan drew my attention to this possible interpretation.

[258] I came across this saying on a calligraphic panel in the Tanman Family Collection, Istanbul. It was recorded as a *hadith* on the panel.

[259] Māverdī, (1985), p.112

[260] In this case it is the recitation of the *Qur'an*, the so called *tilāwat*,that has been considered as an individual science on its own right.

sword) was followed by a second title, *sāhib-i qalam* (owner of pen); both were associated with ideal rulership. The term *sāhib-i sayf* indicates the ability to command while *sāhib-i qalam* implies a mastery of the sciences and literature. Both of these terms emphasize a sultan's two main fields of patronage: the military (*sayfiya*) and the scholarly (*kalemiye/'ulemā*). Many sultans claimed to exhibit the ideals of both these titles, but, as the case of Ahmed III reveals, in some instances the Sultan was born to be the owner of the pen but definitely not the owner of the sword. In the eyes of the *'ulema*, being a man of the sword was infinitely superior to being a man of the pen as they always wished for *jihad*. According to the sixteenth-century Ottoman historian Gelibolulu Mustafa Āli, this was very much the case for sultans and high ranking officials.[261] By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the *'ulema's* opinion was not considered as valid and men of the pen, namely bureaucrats, were becoming more and more influential on stately affairs.

The leading objective of calligraphy has generally been defined as political legitimisation and cultural manifestation, centred mainly on the production of books and albums. The cumulative result of this sponsorship was to establish a benchmark for excellence and criteria for the judgment of artistic quality. The art of calligraphy preserved its leading position and became even more important during the conceptual, formal and technical developments of the early eighteenth century, when, importantly, the state was no longer ruled by soldiers but by bureaucrats. This was not unique to the Ottomans. A similar tendency could be observed in other Muslim monarchs who were involved in practising calligraphy.[262]

The imam of the Imrahor Mosque, Seyyid Abdullah Efendi of Yedikule (d.1731), Mustafa Nūr Efendi (d. 1373), Hoca Mehmed Rāsim Efendi (d. 1755), Suyolcu-zāde Mehmed Necīb Eyyūbī, Süleyman Efendi (the imam of the Fātih Mosque), Mehmed Efendi of Bursa, Şekerzāde Seyyid Mehmed Efendi, Cābī zāde Abdī Ağa, and

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[261] Mustafa Āli of Gelibolu has discussed the reasons of this principle, on account of the vital importance of the continuity of Muslim conquests (*fütūhāt*). According to him, Caliph 'Alī was the only individual who owned both of the titles of "owner of sword" and "owner of pen". [Mustafa Āli (1926), p.4-16]

[262] The Mughal rulers Jahāngir and Shah Jahān were celebrated for their good hands and Awrangzī b was a commendable calligrapher known for his *naskh* [Blair, (2007), p.550]. As for the Safavids, members of the royal family studied calligraphy with recognised masters and even copied manuscripts such as the *Guy u Chowgān* [The National Library of Russia, St Petersburg, Inv. No. 931H (Dorn 441). Published by Priscilla Soucek in *Hunt For Paradise*, (2003), p.106-7] manuscript transcribed by Shah Tahmāsp [Soucek, (2003), p.49].

Vefaî Abdi Ağa[263] were among the regular visitors to Ahmed III's calligraphy salon. Among these calligraphers, those titled *Ağa* were also calligraphy teachers in the Imperial School.

The calligraphers of the Enderun School, Mīr Ebūbekir Ferīd, Mīr Ibrāhim Sıdkı and Sīm Ahmed Lebīb have been recorded as poets and scholars as well.[264] Many of the employees in the Enderun School were considered to be "polymath artists," an image which remained unchanged until the early nineteenth century. Some of these calligraphers were companions to the Sultan (*musāhib*), such as Sīm Ahmed Lebīb, private secretary to Ahmed III.[265]

Hezarfen Mehmed Efendi of Bursa (d.1740) was among the leading calligraphy teachers of the court and was celebrated for supervising the calligraphic works of Ahmed III.[266] He was honoured with some of the most prestigious calligraphic commissions of the period, including the inscriptions of the mosque and mausoleum of the Sultan's mother, Emetullah Vālide, in Üsküdar, and the inscriptions of İbrahim Paşa's complex in the district of Şehzādebaşı, İstanbul.

Mehmed Çelebi was not only a master calligrapher but also a master illuminator, who studied calligraphy under the supervision of Kürtzāde İbrahim Efendi.[267] As Kürtzāde İbrahim Efendi was an average calligrapher, it was Mehmed Çelebi's outstanding talent that allowed him to rise to a palatial post. He composed the inscriptions of the new *dār al-hadith*, built in the district of Şehzādebaşı on the order of Dāmād İbrahim Paşa.

After Hāfız Osman, the second leading figure in Ahmed III's calligraphic circle was Suyolcu-zade Mehmed Necīb Efendi, a calligrapher, calligraphy-scholar and poet. He was responsible for the inscriptions of the aforementioned *Surnāme* of Vehbī, the most significant royal manuscript of the time, which described the circumcision

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[263] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p. 77
[264] Meriç, (1956), pp.141-145,146; Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.138
[265] Meriç, (1956), p.146 Müstakim-zade has recorded this artist as Ahmed b. Hasan [Müstakim-zade, (1928), p.280]
[266] Müstakimzāde (1928), p.77 and also p.456
[267] Ibid, p.456

festival of Ahmed III's sons.[268] His best known work, the *Devhat al-Kuttab*, is an important resource of the biographies of master calligraphers.

Seyyid Abdullah of Yedikule (d.1731), Hāfız Osman's best student, is also noteworthy as he served the court in the capacity of calligraphy teacher at the Enderun School. He was an exceptional student, completed his calligraphy education under the great master in only forty months.[269] He copied 24 *Qur`an* manuscripts, two of which were royal commissions, hundreds of the *Sūrat al-An'am* and many calligraphic albums.[270]

Seyyid Abdullah began teaching in the Enderun School after the death of the previous calligraphy teacher, Sakazāde Mustafa Efendi, in 1708.[271] As evident in anecdotes, Ahmed III valued him. According to Müstakimzāde, one day while working Seyyid Abdullah's inkpot was taken away on the Sultan's order, who was curious about the quality of the ink he used. The ink was tested and the inkpot returned to the calligrapher, filled with gold.[272]

The foremost *nasta'līq* master, Durmuşzāde Ahmed Efendi (d. 1717) must also be mentioned here for his work for the Library of Ahmed III. Among his works dedicated to the Sultan is a beautifully written copy of *Zubdetu āthāri'l-mawāhib wa'l-anwār* (TSMK-A.596).[273] A fine copy of *Tafsir al-Rāghib* by Durmuşzāde, amongst the books of Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi, today kept in the Ali Emīrī Library in İstanbul, is also worth mentioning,.[274] In addition, he is said to have composed many inscriptions in *nasta'līq* for pavilions and seaside-mansions built by the upper class.[275]

Durmuş-zade's best student, Veliyüddin Efendi (d.1768), a future şeyhülislam, was also celebrated at court as a distinguished calligrapher; he was appointed *nasta'līq*

[268] Ibid, p.437
[269] Ibid, p.269
[270] Rado, (1980), p.137
[271] Derman, (1988), p.71
[272] Ibid, p.72
[273] Serin, (1989), p.59
[274] Derman, (2007), p.107
[275] Suyolcuzāde, (1942), p.79

tutor to Ahmed III.[276] He was responsible for the poetic inscriptions in *nasta'līq* on the fountains built by İbrahim Paşa.[277]

In the entirety of Ottoman history, few sultans could have had an administrative circle more involved in the art of calligraphy. Abdülbaki Arif Efendi (d. 1713), a pupil of Mehmed Tabrīzī, was among the most influential calligraphers of the period and was also a member of the calligrapher bureaucrats. He became the chief military judge (*Anadolu kazaskeri*) in 1729 and taught calligraphy to many high-ranking officials and members of the elite. Mehmed Rāşid Efendi (d. 1735), the chronicler (*vak'anüvis*) of Ahmed III, practised calligraphy with him and specialised in *nasta'līq*. Many other members of the courtly circle, such as Katib-zade Mehmed Refii Efendi, the poet Seyyid Vehbī, Şeyhülislam İshak Efendi and Ali al-Rūmī were among his pupils. According to legend, Ali al-Rūmī was one of Abdülbāki Arif Efendi's slaves. After viewing the slave's calligraphic works, Ahmed III bought him from Abdülbāki Arif Efendi.[278] Afterwards, Ali al-Rūmī was appointed as a calligraphy teacher at the palace and earned 80 *akçe* a day.

Members of the upper-class who were also calligraphy practioners, such as Abdülbāki Arif Efendi, played a major role in the revitalization of manuscript production. His *Siyer-i Nebī*, for instance, was copied by his son-in-law, Fāiz Efendi, in 1719, and presented to Dāmād İbrahim Paşa.[279] Ömer al-Kātib (d. 1730) and Ağakapılı-zade Abdullah b. İsmail (d. 1721), son of the calligrapher Ağakapılı Ismail Efendi, were appointed as Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi's official secretaries; he was the head of the religious hierarchy at the time. Many court musicians and poets also practised calligraphy.

Abdurrahman Çinicizāde (d. 1724), the chief-*mevlidhān* (chanter of the nativity poem of the Prophet) of the palace, is another important figure. He was in charge of sharpening the reed pens of master Hāfız Osman in the last days of his life, which was considered a very prestigious occupation. The poet Seyyid Hüseyin Vehbī, called Seyyid Vehbī, was a calligrapher as well and like many others, he practised

[276] Rado, (1980), p.170.
[277] Alparslan, (2008), p.658
[278] Uzun, (1988), p.196
[279] Ibid, p.197

nasta'līq under the supervision of Abdülbaki Arif Efendi; he specialised in *hurda* (tiny) *nas-ta'liq*. He gained great fame with his *Sūr-name* (*Book of Festivities*), which was lavishly illustrated by the court artist Levni. The aforementioned Şeker-zade Mehmed Efendi, who was sent to the Tomb of the Prophet in Medina to copy the Qur`an endowed by Şeyh Hamdullah, was also among the leading figures of Ahmed III's calligraphy salon.[280]

The calligrapher Eğrikapılı Mehmed Rāsim Efendi (d. 1756) was also among the leading figures of the period. He practised calligraphy with his father by working on the styles of *thuluth* and *naskh*, and subsequently became the favourite pupil of Seyyid Abdullah Efendi of Yedikule. He gained a scribe's diploma (*icazetnāme*) from Abdullah Efendi when he was only eighteen years old.[281] In 1714, he was appointed as the calligraphy teacher of the Galata Palace, a branch of the Topkapı Palace Enderun School, and in 1737 was transferred to the Topkapı Palace as a court calligrapher. He was interested in *nasta'līq*, which he practised in his late fifties under the supervision of the court physician, Kātibzāde Mehmed Refi Efendi, who, on the other hand, practised *thuluth* and *naskh* with him, after which Katip-zade Mehmed Refi' Efendi received his*icazet-name* in these scripts from Mehmed Rāsim Efendi. These two masters, as pupils of each other, excited the upper-class so much that a chronogram was composed for their 'diploma exchange'.[282]

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[280] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.419
[281] Derman, (2003), p.514
[282] Ibid, p.515 - The chrongram reads; *Yazar tebrīk-i tārihin bu iki 'izn için hāme / İcāzet birbirinden aldı iki kāmil-i dānā* (The reed pen writes the chronogram for celebrating these two permissions (diplomas) / Two honorable masters got their diplomas from each other). The composer of this chronogram has not been recorded.

CHAPTER THREE

Sultan Ahmed III's Calligraphic Panels, Monumental Inscriptions, and Works Applied on Tiles

جهانك پادشاهيسك خطك ده خطلر پادشاهيدر (نديم)

Cihānın pādişahısın hattın da hatlar pādişāhıdır…

(You are the sultan of the world and your calligraphy is the sultan of calligraphies…)

Nedīm (d. 1730)[283]

[283] *Dīwān*, (1951), p.165

Chapter Three: Sultan Ahmed III's Calligraphic Panels, Monumental Inscriptions, and Works Applied on Tiles

III.1. Ahmed III's Calligraphic Panels

III.1.1. The Panel Format (Levha)

A major portion of Ahmed III's calligraphic oeuvre consists of works on the calligraphic panel (*levha*), which despite being utilised in previous reigns was given greater importance and significance at this time. The majority of the Sultan's calligraphic works were executed on large-scale wooden panels, rather than manuscript and album pages. It was due to his calligraphic panels that the Sultan maintained an outstanding status among calligraphers. His increased use of these large-scale calligraphic compositions and his re-organisation of classical calligraphic presentations made him an innovator in the field**.**

The Sultan's keen interest in the panel format is related to his wish to openly display his art, both in the Topkapı Palace and in public spaces. His official titles included 'The protector of Islam', 'The guardian of Mecca and Medina'[284] and 'The leader of the Muslim community,' and by displaying his calligraphic works in public spaces he consolidated this status and legitimised his rule. He therefore transmitted these messages to the upperclass and '*ulema* via his calligraphic panels and monumental inscriptions. Looked at from another point of view, these works were not only calligraphic panels but hand-written messages from the Sultan, the Caliph (*Khalīfah*) and the commander of the faithful (*Amīr al-Mu'minīn*).

Of these works, those located in the halls of the Topkapı Palace addressed the upper classes, and in particular the '*ulema*. Among these panels and monumental inscriptions, those located in the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet are the earliest calligraphic works by an Ottoman sultan endowed to this most-sacred unit of the palace. In addition, Ahmed III placed his panels in the most visited mosques and

[284] Findley, (2006), p.67

mausoleums of the capital, including the Mausoleum of Abā Ayyūb al-Ansārī[285] in the Eyüp district, the Ayasofya Mosque and the Şehzāde Mosque.

One may interpret the Sultan's presentation of his calligraphic panels to religious monuments as a self-signifying gesture of support as he was unable to organize costly campaigns to conquer infidel's lands. In addition, due to the ongoing economic decline and its impact on his reign, he was unable to patronise the *'ulemā*'s mosques, *medrese*s and the lodges of dervish brotherhoods as generously as his predecessors had. With his calligraphic panels and monumental inscriptions, he was thus asserting his own presence within the celebrated monuments of the city.

Since Ahmed`s calligraphic works were exceptionally accomplished and original, he may have aimed to win acceptance in the minds of the faithful by displaying his panels in public-spaces. By these means, calligraphy, for the first time, was openly instrumental in the self-representation of an Ottoman sultan. The spaces chosen by the Sultan to locate his panels were therefore the two basic architectural units of power in the empire: the Palace and the Mosque.

III.1.1.a. The Formation of the Panel Format

Until the reign of Ahmed III, calligraphy was rarely created for portable panels (*levha*) and large inscriptions (*jalī*) were composed only for monumental/epigraphic purposes.[286] Such works appeared either on wall panels of Iznik tiles or were carved on marble epigraphic plaques, mostly in the form of foundation inscriptions. These were thus fixed panels that could not be moved. There are some unusual examples of mobile calligraphic panels attributable to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A sixteenth-century monumental *jalī thuluth basmala* in the 'calligraphy room' of the Topkapı Palace is one such early work. Another early specimen has been recorded by Evliya Çelebi, which is a *tughra* panel created by Sultan Murād IV and seen by Çelebi in Egypt. Calligraphic panels executed by Ahmed III, on the other hand, were

[285] Abā Ayyūb al-Ansārī, martyred during the Arab siege of Istanbul, is one of the leading saintly figures of the city, whose grave was discovered by Mehmed II and became an important place of visitation.

[286] For detailed information on *jali* inscriptions in Ottoman calligraphy see; Derman, (1980), pp.30-35. [Evliya Çelebi, (1938), Vol:X, p.180] I owe this reference to Professor Doris Behrens-Abouseif.

portable, unlike their epigraphic counterparts, and openly available for viewing, unlike manuscripts and albums. Furthermore, they are among some of the earliest examples of Islamic calligraphy set within European-style frames.

Why was the panel format not in common use until Ahmed III's reign? The answer lies in the firm regulations of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Ottoman calligraphy, devotedly focused on manuscript and album production, following the style of Şeyh Hamdullah (d.1526), calligraphy teacher and court calligrapher to Sultan Bāyazid II (r.1481-1512).

Almost all Ottoman calligraphers of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were strict followers of Şeyh Hamdullah.[287] They were trained to copy manuscripts and produce calligraphy for albums that following the proportions set by the Şeyh , and not in writing larger-sized scripts. Monumental epigraphy applied on tiles for interior decoration and on marble for foundation inscriptions did not serve the same aesthetic purpose that Ahmed`s portable panels did. Inscriptions applied on Iznik tiles, in particular, rarely preserved their original sharp finish and perfect proportions. This was inevitable since the edges of the letters were blurred during firing. For this reason, the calligraphic panels of Ahmed III, with their innovative and ground-breaking nature, display a unique state of originality in the transmission of small-scale script to larger scale inscriptions.

Ahmed`s brother Mustafa II also deserves recognition as an outstanding figure in the formation of the panel format. He executed calligraphic compositions on unframed, wooden plaques before Ahmed III. However, although he may have been the first Sultan to employ this format, his aim in creating these panels was completely different from Ahmed's and instead was rather spiritual. The five calligraphic panels signed by Mustafa II, in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts in İstanbul, have so far not been the subject of scholarly debate.[288]

As indicated, there are basic differences between the approaches of these two calligrapher sultans in the use of the panel format. Mustafa II's primary concern was

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[287] For further information on the impact and legacy of Sheikh Hamdullah see; Muhittin Serin's *Şeyh Hamdullah* [2007], pp.40-47. Also see; Sheila Blair's *Islamic Calligraphy* [2007], pp.479-481.
[288] TIEM 2722, 2723, 2369, 2775, and 2784.

not at all political; he signed his panels "Derviş Mustafa Āl-i Osmān" (Dervish Mustafa of the Ottoman Household), with no reference to his rulership.[289] In addition, his compositions, which were much smaller than those later designed by Ahmed III, were also extremely intricate, to the point of being almost illegible, and thus were clearly not designed to convey a specific message to the viewer, especially from a distance (Fig.3).[290] Only two of his panels were created on a larger scale. The first one is the *jalī muhaqqaq basmalah* in the Ayasofya (190x62 cm), displayed on the right side of the mihrab. The second (149x55 cm) is in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, İstanbul (inv. no. 2723). As far as is known, these two larger panels by Mustafa II are the earliest sultanic works prepared for public display in the history of Ottoman calligraphy.

Figure.3 *Jalī Thuluth* Panel by Sultan Mustafa II (TIEM, Inv. No.2722)

The calligraphic *finesse* in the panels of Ahmed III, however, is far beyond that which was exhibited by Mustafa II in his.[291] It was Ahmed III who used the panel format to introduce higher artistic standards, as well as a propagandistic nature, to Ottoman epigraphic calligraphy. In this instance, by the term "high standards" I mean harmony in the connection of letters, balance of line, and perfection in the calligraphic proportions of the composition as a whole.

In his calligraphic panels, Ahmed III employed the *jali thuluth* script that the Ottomans favoured for monumental epigraphy, throughout the 16th and 17th

[289] Rado, (1980), p.117
[290] The *jali thuluth* panel by Mustafa II in The Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul, [Inv No.2784], measures 45x36cm. A second panel in *jali thuluth* by him in the same museum [Inv No.2775], measures 38x49cm. The other three also have comparable dimensions.
[291] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.539

centuries. However, in Ahmed's *jali thuluth*, letters appear to be lighter, wider and less attached in comparison with early epigraphic inscriptions. The increased space between letters enables the viewer to see the individually standing letters and their connections more clearly. This gives a real sense of the design. With Ahmed's sharp strokes and crystalline letter endings, each letter stands out individually and is located in such a way that, as a whole the composition (*istif*) displays perfect balance and harmony. As can be seen in his *Muhammed al-Hādī* composition (cat:12), Ahmed is a master of calligraphic design.

Ahmed III did not execute any calligraphic works in the classical *kıt'a* format, which was the most common and polished type of small-scale work prepared for inclusion in an album. They were written in a horizontal format, usually with a large line of *thuluth* and five lines of *naskh*. Ahmed III clearly neglected the *kıt'a* format on purpose since he wished to hone his calligraphic skills primarily as a master of the *jalī* script.

By the second half of the seventeenth century calligraphers were in pursuit of new calligraphic formats. This was part of a major search for innovation, related to styles and techniques introduced in the city of Edirne. A small group of seventeenth-century wooden plaques bearing calligraphic inscriptions provide evidence of this transitional era. French ambassador Antoine Galland who visited İstanbul in 1672-1673, mentions individual wooden plaques bearing Turkish couplets executed under the reign of Sultan Ahmed I (r.1603-1616), Sultan Osman II (r.1618-1622) and Sultan Murad IV (r.1623-1640).[292] An extant example is a wooden plaque (TSM-HA.8/544) bearing a *Quranic* verse, dated 1691 and measuring 158x64cm, in the Harem collection of the Topkapı Palace (Fig.4).

[292] Galland, II (1973), p. 92.

Figure.4 The Wooden Panel Bearing a *Quranic* Verse, Dated 1691, (Topkapı Palace, Harem Collection, H.8/544)

Unlike standard calligraphic panels, it features an unusual form with architectural references, such as arch-shaped openings at the extreme ends of the panel. It was possibly designed to be fitted in a wall or to be attached above a piece of furniture. Such large wooden plaques can be associated with the interior decorations of governors' residences built in the Ottoman provinces in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly those in Damascus and Aleppo.[293] Therefore, these works can not be identified as calligraphic panels.

In some cases, album leaves bearing *jalī* calligraphy which had fallen out of albums have been mistakenly identified as calligraphic panels. An example of such a mis-identification is the album page (TSMK-E.H.2102) bearing *Huwa al-Bāqī* in *thuluth*, signed by Mustafa Dede (d.1538).[294]

III.1.2. The Sultan's Panels

There are 24 calligraphic panels of a religious nature signed by Ahmed III, some of which are still in situ while the rest are in museums and private collections.

The *jalī thuluth "ra's al-ḥikmat makhāfat Allāh"* panel in overlaid gold, in the Ayasofya Mosque.

The *jalī thuluth "ra's al-ḥikmat makhāfat Allāh"* panel in overlaid gold, in the Yeni Vālide Mosque in Üsküdar, İstanbul.

The *jalī thuluth "al-jannatu ta ḥtal-am al-ummahāt"* panel in overlaid gold, in the Yeni Vālide Mosque in Üsküdar, İstanbul.

[293] Keenan, (2008), pp.120-132.
[294] Abu Dhabi (2009), p.429.

The *jalī thuluth* "*Addi farāi ḍ allāhi takun muti'an"* panel in overlaid gold, TIEM 2800. Originally located in the Selīmiye Mosque in Üsküdar, İstanbul.

The *jalī thuluth Basmala* panel in soot ink, TIEM 2768. Originally located in the Zeynep Sultan Mosque, İstanbul.

The *jalī thuluth Basmala* panel in overlaid gold, TIEM 2799. Originally located in the Selīmiye Mosque in Üsküdar, İstanbul.

The mirror-image *jalī thuluth Basmala* panel in overlaid gold, TIEM 2724. Originally located in the Selīmiye Mosque in Üsküdar, İstanbul.

The *jalī thuluth Basmala* panel in overlaid gold, TIEM 2721. Brought to the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts from the Archaeological Museum, İstanbul.

The *jalī thuluth* "*Ḥasbi Allāhu wa ni'm al-wakīl"* panel in ink, TIEM 2714. Originally located in the Mausoleum of Baba Cafer in Zindankapı, İstanbul.

The *jalī thuluth Tevhīd* panel in overlaid gold, TIEM 2725. Originally located in the Mausoleum of Hatice Turhan Sultan in Emin Önü, İstanbul.

The *jalī thuluth* "*Al-najāt fi al-ṣ idq*" panel in overlaid gold, TVHSM 2125.

The jali thuluth "Ra's al-ḥikmat makhāfat Allāh" panel in overlaid gold, TVHSM.[295]

The jali thuluth "Al-jannatu ta ḥt aqdā m al-ummahāt" panel in overlaid gold, TVHSM.2125

The *jalī thuluth "Faallama innahu lā ilāha illallāh"* panel in overlaid gold, in the Mausoleum of Mustafa Devātī, in Üsküdar, İstanbul.

The *jalī thuluth Tevhīd* panel in overlaid gold, in the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet in the Topkapı Palace 21/220.

The "*Ahmed bin Mehmed Hān al-muzaffar dāimen*" *Tughra* panel in ink, in the Collection of Neslişah Osmanoğlu, İstanbul.

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[295] No inventory number available, on display in the museum.

The *jalī thuluth "Mu ḥammad* panel in overlaid gold, in the Collection of Ayşegül Nadir, London.

The *jalī thuluth* "*Addi farāi ḍallāhi takun muti'an"* panel in overlaid gold. Located in the Şehzāde Mosque in İstanbul.

The jali thuluth "Fallāhu khayrun ḥāfiẓ an wa huwa arḥ am al-rā ḥmīn" panel in ink, TSM 8/322

The *jalī thuluth tevhīd* panel in the Chancery Hall in the Topkapı Palace.

The jali thuluth "Fatabārak allāhu a ḥsan al-khāliqīn" panel, TSM 06/31655

The *jalī thuluth* Turkish Quatrain Panel in the Library of Ahmed III in the Topkapı Palace.

The *Tughra* of Ahmed III in the Chancery Hall in the Topkapı Palace

The *Tughra* of Ahmed III in the Chancery Hall in the Topkapı Palace.

III.1.3. Text

The textual repertoire of the calligraphic panels penned by Ahmed III includes *Quranic* verses, *hadith*s, the *tevhīd* declaration, the names and titles of the Prophet, one of the witness (*shāhid*s) phrase and two poems in Turkish. The content chosen by Ahmed III for placement on his panels and their importance will be the focus of discussioned in this section.

The Sultan wrote 18 panels with *Quranic* verses and *hadith*s. Eleven of these exhibiting the former while six were of the latter; all were composed in their original Arabic text. The total number of *Quranic* verses he employed is four and of the *hadith*s, three. He placed these in the most-often visited sacred sites of the capital, namely in mosques and mausoleums, creating a God-fearing image in the eyes of pious visitors as well as the leading religious monuments of İstanbul with his devout imprint. As all these calligraphic panels were signed, his name appeared alongside the *Quranic* verses and *hadith*s he placed in these public spaces. These verses and *hadith*s were carefully selected, fundamental religious clichés of Islam with which Ahmed clearly wanted to be associated. In retrospect, the image Ahmed III projected through his calligraphic panels was rather pathetic, since he, who aimed to reflect

Islamic virtues through his panels, was ultimately unable to protect the lands of Islam. Perhaps emphasizing the virtues of Islamic faith through his calligraphy was the only alternative he had remaining to him.

In addition to these 23 panels, the Sultan also calligraphed poetic texts in this particular format. However, he never employed selections of favoured poetic texts often seen in Ottoman calligraphy, such as the Persian *Basmala Ode* by the Timurid poet 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī (d.1492) or the Turkish *hilyeh* of the Prophet by the Ottoman poet Muhammad Khāqānī (d.1606).

Moreover, the Sultan's selection of texts to be written had a technical aspect. He selected relatively short texts which could be presented within the limits imposed by the panel format. In doing so, he established a new textual *genre,* panel texts (*levha yazıları*), suitable for calligraphic panels. The texts chosen for these panels are short but eye-catching.

When selecting texts for his calligraphic panels the Sultan seems to have followed the basic principle of calligraphy as set down in the treatise of the Abbasid calligrapher Ibn al-Bawwāb, *How to become a Calligrapher*: 'write only the good and the true'.[296] In all his calligraphic panels, Ahmed seems to be following these principles. These panels were to be seen, therefore, not just as religious quotations, but also as expressions of the Sultan's moral perfection. None of these panels bear texts referring to the Sultan's *sufi* background as the sayings exhibited had to appeal to all Muslims who would have encountered them, even those who did not approve of Islamic mysticism.

III.1.3.a. The *Quranic* verses

The *Basmala: Bism'illāhi al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* (In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy), The *Qur'an* 1:1

[296] Wright, (2009), p.101 Ibn al-Bawwāb also implies that a calligrapher's work is the reflection of his true nature. Members of Ahmed III's calligraphy salon were interested in works copied by Ibn al-Bawwāb. It is known that Ebubekir b. Rüstem al-Şirvāni, one of the courtiers of the Sultan, owned a copy of *Risālet-i Abī Uthmān 'Amr ibn Baḥr al-Jāhiz fī Madḥ al-kutubi wa al-ḥūbb 'alā Jāmi'* signed by Ibn al-Bawwāb. See, Serin, (2003), p.59.

The *Basmala* is the first verse of the Holy *Qur'an*, and as the most popular sacred formula was constantly used in everyday prayer as well as being the *Quranic* verse most frequently transcribed by calligraphers since the early days of Islam, especially since the *hadith*s encouraged its transcription. For example, several *hadith*s that speak about those "who write the *basmala* beautifully" specify that they "will enter paradise",[297] "will be forgiven his sins, especially if they write it in the praise of God",[298] "shall be forgiven",[299] "shall receive divine grace",[300] and so on.

Ḥasbī allāhu wa ni'm al-wakīl (God is enough for us, He is the best protector), The *Qur'an* 3:173.

Ahmed III's particular interest in this *Quranic* verse can be related to a *hadith* stating its importance. It states that when Prophet Abraham was put in fire, his last words were '*ḥasbī allāhu wa ni'm al-wakīl'* (God is enough for us, He is the best protector) and he was saved.[301] This *hadith* indicates a clear link between the salvation of Abraham from fire and this particular *Quranic* verse. Ahmed III, who was very much interested in the science of *hadith* (*'ilm-i hadith*), knew this particular example and transcribed it to attain divine intercession. Ahmed's particular interest is manifested by his library, in which he dedicated a corner of it for the reading of *hadith*. In addition, he comprised a collection of manuscripts on *hadith* that he marked with his own endowment seal.

Fa-allāhu khayrun ḥāfiẓān wa huwa arḥam al-rāḥimīn (God is the best guardian and the most merciful of the merciful), The *Qur'an* 12:64.

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[297] Suyūtī, vol:I (2003), p.49
[298] *Man kataba bism-i allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm mucawwadatan ta'zīman li-allāh ghafarallāhu lahū* [Suyūtī, vol:I (2003), p.48]. For further information on this hadith also see; Roxburgh, (2007), p.75
[299] *Man kataba bism-i allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm fa-ḥassanahā ghufira lahū* [Khatīb, vol: VI (2001), p.173]
[300] *Man kataba bism-i allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm fa-ḥassanahū aḥsanallāhu ilayhi* [Qalqashandī, vol:VI (1922), p.221]
[301] Gümüşhanevī, (2001), p.17

The *fa-allāhu khayrun ḥāfiẓan wa huwa arḥam al-rāḥimīn* is among the protective verses (*khatt-i munjī*) of the *Qur'an*. Ahmed III's use of this verse could have been influenced by its earlier application in the Vālide lodge of the Imperial Harem, where it was possibly used to provide divine protection for the female members of the Ottoman household.

Fa-tabārak allāhu aḥsan al-khāliqīn (Glory be to God, who is the most beneficent of creators), The *Qur'an* 23:14.

III.1.3.b. The *Hadith*s of Prophet Muhammad

Ra's al-ḥikmat makhāfat-Allāh (Fearing God is the beginning of wisdom).[302]

Al-jannatu taḥt al-aqdām-i ummahāt (Paradise is under the feet of mothers).[303]

Al-najāt fi al-ṣidq (Salvation comes with loyalty).[304]

III.1.3.c. The *Tevhīd* Declaration

The declaration of the *tevhīd*, *Lā ilāha illallāh Muḥammadan rasūl-Allāh* (there is no God but *Allah*, Muhammad is *Allah's* Messenger),[305] is the key of the Islamic faith. Calligraphing this fundamental saying not only consolidated the Sultan's caliphal image, but also carried him to a blessed level. According to Müstakimzāde, the "well-preserved tablet" (*lavḥ-i maḥfūẓ*) and the "celestial pen" mentioned in the *Qur'an* were created before the world and the first inscription ever to be written

[302] Bayhaki, vol:I, (1990), p.470
[303] Ahmad b. Hanbal, vol:III, (1895), p.429
[304] Al-Hindī, vol:III, (1981), p.344
[305] لا اله الاالله محمد رسول الله

on the well-preserved tablet was the *tevhīd*.[306] According to a *hadith* of the Prophet: "Two thousand years before the creation of the heavens and the earth, the formula written above the gate of Paradise was: There is no God but *Allah*, Muhammad is the messenger of *Allah*, 'Ali is the brother of that messenger".[307] The heavenly connection with this text was undoubtedly what Ahmed III wished to be associated with.

III.1.3.d. Names and Titles of the Prophet

In some of his calligraphic panels Ahmed III enriched his composition with mystical symbolism. An application of this type can best be observed in his *jalī thuluth* panel bearing the inscription محمدالهادی '*Muḥammad al-Hādī*'[308] (Muhammad, who shows the right way), in a private collection in London, which bears the pear-shaped signature of Ahmed III, "Ahmed bin Mehemmed *Hān*". At first sight the panel reads "Muhammad, who shows the right way," but "*al-Hādī*" is also one of the ninety-nine names of God and the *zulfiqār* is associated with 'Ali. Therefore, this particular composition may be interpreted as an assembly of the Prophet, God, and 'Ali (Muhammad + *al-Hādī* + the *zulfiqār*). Such organisations exhibiting different layers of meaning can also be observed in the Sultan's poems.

III.1.3.e. The Witness (*Shāhid*) Phrase

The sole witness (*shāhid*) phrase that Ahmed wrote is *Addi farāiḍ'allāhi takun muṭ i'an* (Obey the commands of God in order to become his obedient servant). He seems to have used this phrase as not only a message to the people of his community, but also as a religious recommendation in his capacity as the Caliph-Sultan. This phrase belongs to a group of Arabic phrases used among scholars for

[306] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.8
[307] The *hadith* reads; "Maktūbun 'alā bāb al-jannati lā ilāha illallāh, Muḥammadan rasūlallāh, 'Aliyyun akhu rasūlallāh, qabla an yakhluqa al-samāwāti wa al-'arḍi bi-alfay āmin." Al-Hindī, (1981), vol:XI, p.624. (I owe this reference to Dr. Nedim Tan).
[308] محمدالهادی , Seen in the London art market in 1987. See, Hoare, (1987), p. 20

pointing out grammatical rules. Ahmed III, by composing this phrase, possibly wished to demonstrate his insight of Arabic.

III.1.3.f. Two Poems in Turkish

Among his innovative applications to calligraphy is Ahmed III's use of Turkish texts for his panels. Traditionally, many master calligraphers, including his teacher Hāfız Osman Efendi, only wrote Arabic texts.[309]

Both of the Turkish poems Ahmed penned were composed by the Sultan himself. The first, found on the eastern corner of his Library in the third courtyard of the Topkapı Palace, reads:

"Ashhadu anna lā ilāha illa Allāh

Yaptım bu makamı li-merzati'llāh

Okundukça tefāsīr ü ehādis

Şefāatdir ümmīdim Yā Resūlallāh"[310]

(I declare that there is no God but *Allah*

I built this place for the sake of God

As commentaries on the *Qur'an* and *hadith*s are recited here

Oh the Prophet of God! Receiving your intercession is my hope).

A second poem in Turkish is found on the *jalī thuluth tevhīd* panel (TIEM 2725). This, in fact, is the opening poem of the *Dīwān* of Ahmed III, in praise of the *tevhīd*

[309] Dere, (2001), p.29
[310] Yenal, (1949), p.87

formula (Fig.26). It is no coincidence that the poem, in *nasta'līq* script, was applied to this particular panel surrounding the *tevhīd* formula; this poem was selected by the Sultan on purpose as it would naturally suit and harmonize with the main composition. This poem, in an early twentieth-century copy of the Sultan's *Dīwān* (MK.AE.M.529), does not consist of eight couplets, as seen on the panel, but four quatrains.[311] On the panel the quatrains have purposefully been divided into couplets since units of two lines were much more suitable for enframing the main composition than units of four.

The poem of Ahmed III surrounding the jali thuluth tawhid composition reads:

Mücmer-i cân-i āşık içre düter

Anber-i Lā ilāhe illallāh

Emr-i Hakk ile kân-i dilde biter

Cevher-i Lā ilāhe illallāh

(In the incense-burner of the soul of the lover burns

The ambergris of 'there is no God but *Allah*'

On holy command, the heart's mine nurtures

The ore of 'there is no God but *Allah*')

Bitse arz-i derûnda ihlâs

Meyvesi olur anın hassu'l has

Şerr-i şirkden olur elbetde halâs[312]

Mazhar-i Lā ilāhe illallāh

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[311] Millet Library - Istanbul, Ali Emīrī - Manzum, No:529, pp.2-3

[312] This verse is different in the Ali Emīrī copy: '*Her kederden bulur amān u halās*'. See, Millet Library: Ali Emīrī, Manzum, No: 529, pp.2

(If pure sincerity of the heart was to grow in the fields of the soul

It was to have the most excellent fruit

To be saved from the wickedness of presuming the existence of a partner for God

One has to be blessed with the knowledge of 'There is no God but *Allah*')

Nedür âlemde sîne-i Âdem

Sûret-i mushaf-ı esrâr-ı kadem[313]

Hâtırından çıkarma kıl her dem

Ezber-i Lā ilāhe illallāh

(What is the heart of man to be in this world:

The image of 'the book of the secrets of eternal existence in the past'[314]

Do not take out of your mind, learn by heart:

'There is no God but *Allah*')

On sekiz bin cihâne bir hoş bak

Gûyiyâ oldu mescîd-i mutlak

Vardır anda berây-i hutbe-i Hakk

Minber-i Lā ilāhe illallāh

(Find the whole world pleasing

As if it was the mosque of the 'Absolute'[315]

For the *khutba* of truth, in which, there is

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[313] '*Rumūz-u kadem*' in the Ali Emīrī copy. See, Millet Library: Ali Emīrī, Manzum, No:529, pp.3
[314] Meaning The *Qur'an*
[315] Meaning God

The *minbar* of 'There is no God but *Allah*')

According to Ali Emīrī Efendi (1857-1924), the copier of the *Dīwān* of Ahmed III noted another poem of his dedicated to a *Bektaşi* saint, Nefes Baba. This, however, will be discussed below.

III.1.4. Originals in Ink and their Reproductions of Overlaid Gold

Jalī thuluth panels of the Sultan can be classified into two main groups according to their techniques of production. The first consists of panels composed in ink and the second includes panels of calligraphy overlaid in gold and those executed with the *malakārī* technique using a pounced model (*kalıp*).[316] Among Ahmed III's 23 calligraphic panels, 5 are written in ink of black soot, 1 in white ink and 17 are overlaid in gold.[317] The true skill of a calligrapher can be judged first and foremost from his works in ink. Overlaid gold inscriptions, usually perfected by illuminators, have a slightly "refined" finish. For this reason, the Sultan's calligraphic panels in ink are the most significant examples of his work.

Seventeen calligraphic panels by Ahmed III are in gold and were executed using a pounce; these works are sophisticated copies of originals or drafts.[318] Works in *zerendūd*, or overlaid gold, were not written with a reed pen like those in ink, but the original composition was either copied or outlined before its pattern was overlaid with gold. The originals of the overlaid gold panels of Ahmed III are unknown to us. Since calligraphic designs of such large compositions were easily damaged by pouncing, it is very likely that most of the original drafts were torn. Overlaid gold inscriptions on panels appeared during the reign of Ahmed III, and, as far as is known, these panels are among the earliest examples of this type in the history of

[316] The Turkish word *kalıp* is from the Arabic *qālib* or *qālab*, meaning a mould, stencil or matrix. The *kalıp* was copied from a calligraphic original, often written specifically for the purpose using a special yellow, arsenic based ink on brown or black paper. Safwat, (1996), p.142.
[317] For panels in soot ink see: cat:1, 3, 9, 23. For the panel in white ink see: cat:13. For panels in overlaid gold see: cat:4,5,6,7,8,10,11,12,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22.
[318] The originals of the overlaid gold copies are unknown to us. They might have remained as drafts.

Ottoman calligraphy. However, the traditional technique of transferring a design or calligraphic composition by the use of stencils has always been in use.[319].

The idea of using gold ink for Islamic calligraphy stretches back to the 9th century and was popular in Ottoman calligraphy from the sixteenth century onwards.[320] In early works, gold ink was used as a sign of prosperity. Ahmed III, however, began the practice of replicating his panel compositions, originally of ink, in overlaid gold.

The application of overlaid gold on calligraphic panels can be related to the intrinsic qualities of display associated with such a format. A calligraphic panel bearing overlaid gold inscriptions was much more eye-catching then a panel composed in soot-ink.[321] Furthermore, by using overlaid-gold the production of high quality copies of an ink original was possible. In other words, several copies of a panel could be easily produced.

Regarding the creation of calligraphic stencils to be pounced, as stated by Safwat, "*Kalıb* making required two stages. In the first, the original work was placed over one or more sheets of paper and the outline of the calligraphy pierced with dots or perforation marks, using a needle or a sharp-pointed tool, at intervals of a millimetre. The stencil was the secondary perforated sheet which could then be used to reproduce the outline of the calligraphic original upon a third sheet. Such a method enabled multiple productions, as one could make ten stencilled sheets just as easily as one, and each of these could give rise to another ten and so on. The stencil was thus a tool – a means of reproduction – and not an end-production. The second stage involved tapping charcoal powder through the holes in the stencil".[322] Using stencils and pouncing (Arabic *qālib*, Turkish *kalıp*), calligraphic designs could be reproduced in multiple media, including textiles.[323]

The process of making stencils for the production of overlaid gold panels demanded skill and while performed by an illuminator, was usually supervised by the

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[319] Blair, (2007), p.497
[320] The best-known example from the ninth-tenth centuries is the "Blue Qur`an" commissioned by an Andalusian patron. For further discussion see; Stanley, (1999), pp.7-15.
[321] Hereafter referred to as just 'ink,' but unless otherwise specified, refers to the ink composed of black-soot.
[322] Safwat, (1996), p. 142. Also see; Roxburgh, (2007), p.83
[323] Blair, (2007), p.476

calligrapher. It is most likely the case that Ahmed III supervised and even was involved with the stencil-making process of his panels. Müstakim-zāde notes that the private-secretary of Ahmed III, Tozkondurmaz Mustafa Agha, was responsible for the production of the overlaid (*zerendūd*) copies of the Sultan's panels and their illumination.[324] Ahmed III was very keen on the quality of his work's illumination and sometimes personally supervised master illuminators while they illuminated his calligraphic works. [325] The Sultan's distinctive signatures that appear on his works written in ink also appear on his works of overlaid gold.

Although it is rare, in some cases two versions of the same calligraphic composition, executed both in ink and in gold, are available. One such example is the overlaid gold *jalī thuluth basmala* panel (TIEM 2721), in the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, İstanbul, which has clearly been copied from the *jalī thuluth basmala* panel (TIEM 2768) done in ink (Fig.5a-b).[326] Although the dimensions of the overlaid gold copy have been slightly enlarged to 130x41 cm from the original 93x26cm, the proportions of the original *basmala* have faultlessly been preserved.

Figure 5a. The *Jalī Thuluth Basmala* panel in ink by Sultan Ahmed III (TIEM 2768, cat. no. 3)

[324] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.78
[325] Rado, (1980), p.134
[326] See, cat. nos. 3 and 4.

Figure 5b. The *zerendūd* copy of the *Jalī Thuluth Basmala* panel in overlaid gold by Sultan Ahmed III (TIEM 2721, cat. no. 4)

Often the original panels in ink used as the basis for stencils do not survive and their copies in overlaid-gold remain as the only evidence of the lost originals in ink. At times the copies can even provide the date of the original ink production since the dates are also transferred from the pounced originals. For instance, a second *jalī thuluth basmala* panel (TIEM 2799) in overlaid gold[327] and the marble plaque located above the entrance of the chamber of petitions in the Topkapı Palace[328] were clearly copied from the same original. The marble plaque, dated 1131 A.H./1718 A.D., provides historical evidence that the ink original had been produced in that year or before.

III.1.5. Location of Panels

III.1.5.a. Calligraphic Panels in the Topkapı Palace

Panels executed by Ahmed III played an important role in the epigraphic repertoire of the Topkapı Palace. The Sultan located a group of his masterfully executed calligraphic panels, both ink originals and overlaid gold copies, in various halls of the Topkapı Palace. Among those the most significant sites were the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, which had an extremely important role in courtly life, and the Hall of the *Divān* (*kubbealtı*), where the high-ranking officials met. These were the most-visited halls of the palace, where the Sultan's epigraphic messages could be seen by all the members of his court.

The Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet is the most sacred hall in the Topkapı Palace, housing the relics of the Prophet, including his Holy Mantle (*al-Burda*), banner, sword and staff. The holy relics were brought to the palace by Sultan Selīm I following the Ottoman conquest of Syria and Egypt in 1517.[329] The significance of

[327] See, cat. no.5
[328] See, cat. no.32
[329] Kuban, (2007), p.420

this holy Hall and its holdings has a long history. The hall itself had been regarded as a sanctuary by many sultans and was frequently visited. Consisting of four rooms, the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet included the crown room of Mehmed II (1451-1482), the most esteemed section of the Palace (*Has Oda*). Like his predecessors, Ahmed III paid regular visits to the hall of the Mantle of the Prophet.[330] Every year, on 15th Ramadan, the Sultan used to visit the Mantle, following a courtly tradition. On those visits the hall was cleaned and its walls wiped with rose-water.

Among the holy relics kept in the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, two were of vital importance to the Ottomans; the banner and the Mantle of the Prophet. In cases of revolt, campaign and war, the banner of the Prophet and even sometimes the Mantle were taken out of the hall as a sign of the Sultan's ultimate authority of the Muslim community.[331]

Since the Abbasid period the Holy Mantle had been regarded as the primary mark of the exalted office of the Caliph;[332] those who inherited the Mantle, which had been presented to Qa'b ibn Zuhayr by the Prophet Muhammad himself, projected a sacred image as the Prophet's legitimate successor. This relic thus signified descent from the Prophet,[333] and would have been applied to the Ottoman rulers who now owned it. Owning the Mantle of the Prophet also played a vital role in symbolizing the leadership of the Muslim world. This policy had been reinforced by vast literature on the Mantle of the Prophet, particularly praised in the famous *Qasīdat al-Burda* (the Ode of the Mantle) by the Arab poet al-Busīrī (d.1295).

In the eyes of the Ottoman ruling class, the Mantle of the Prophet was more than a holy relic. It was a spiritual weapon or firewall that could be used against enemies of the Sultan, both for campaigns and rebellions.

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[330] The first visit was held in 1117 A.H. (1704 A.D.). The following visits were mostly in Ramadān and Rabī'al-awwal: 17 Ramadān 1118 (1705 A.D.) 18 Ramadān 1119 (1707 A.D.)16 Jamād al-awwal 1120 (1708). 15 zil-hijja 1121 (1709). 14 jamād al-awwal 1122 (1710 A.D.).17 Ramadān 1124 (1711A.D.). 13 Ramadān 1125 (1712.A.D.).17 Rabī' al-awwal 1126 (1713A.D.) etc. Rāşid, (H.1282), Vol:III, p.169

[331] Aydın, (2004), p.81
[332] Arnold, (2000), p.27
[333] Sakaoğlu, (1994), p.67

The *Jalī Thuluth Tevhīd* Panel in the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet (TSM-HSD 21/200)

This panel (Fig.6), located in the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, is especially important since it emphasizes the piety of the Sultan, and thus appears to have been chosen for purposes of personal propaganda.

Fig.6 *Jalī Thuluth Tevhīd* panel by Ahmed III from the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, Topkapı Palace, inv. no. HSD 21/200.

As mentioned above, every year on 15th Ramadan the Sultan and his court customarily visited the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet. Ahmed III, by placing his own *tevhīd* panel in this hall, accomplished three things: he integrated his art with this most holy imperial space, underlined his devotion to the holy relics, and verified himself as "the owner of the relics of the Prophet" (*mukaddes emānetlerin sāhibi*).

The *jalī thuluth fa-allāhu khayrun ḥāfiẓān wa huwa arḥam al-rāḥimīn* panel in the Harem

This *fa-allāhu khayrun ḥāfizān wa huwa arḥam al-rāḥimīn* panel (TSM-HA.8/322), measuring 60x245cm, in the Harem of the Topkapı Palace is the Sultan's largest calligraphic panel in ink that is known to us (Fig. 7). It bears his pear-shaped signature that reads "Ahmed bin Mehemmed *Hān*". It appears that the placement of this panel in the Imperial Harem was no coincidence.

Fig.7 The *Jalī Thuluth* Panel in the Harem

The inspiration for this panel of Ahmed III is an earlier epigraphic inscription today located above the arched gates of the Imperial Harem leading to the so-called Hall of Mihrişāh Vālide Sultan (Fig.8). It is very likely that this epigraphic inscription was placed above this gate sometime in the mid-seventeenth century, during the renovations to the Harem.[334] Unfortunately the calligrapher responsible for this inscription is unknown.

Fig.8 The *Jalī Thuluth* Verse Above the Passage to the Hall of Mihrishāh Vālide Sultan

Ahmed III's *fa-allāhu khayrun ḥāfiẓan wa huwa arḥam al-rāḥimīn* panel is interestingly similar to this inscription and the composition of the text is almost identical. However, the last word of the *Quranic* verse, *al-rāḥimīn*, is slightly different in Ahmed's panel. This alteration could be interpreted as the Sultan's wish to break the monotony of the linear composition, as well as his desire to create enough space under the word *arham* for his pear-shaped signature. This *Quranic* verse has an important place in the epigraphic repertoire of the Imperial Harem.

An almost identical application of the same *Quranic* verse, but with the addition of a *basmala* at the beginning, is found above the arched entrance of the so-called Ocaklı Sofa (Fire-place Hall) of the Harem complex (Fig.9).

[334] Dr. Canan Cimilli drew my attention to this epigraphic panel in the Imperial Harem.

Fig.9 The *Jalī Thuluth* Verse Above the Entrance of the Ocaklı Sofa in the Harem

The reason for the repetition of this *Quranic* verse, used for protection, above the arched entrances of the above-mentioned halls is related to the epigraphic programme of the Imperial Harem, although studying the complete program in detail cannot be done within the confines of this dissertation. Interestingly, Ahmed III had the same verse placed above the window next to the minbar of his mother's mosque, the Mosque of Emetullah Gülnuş Vālide Sultan in Üsküdar.[335] This makes it possible that the Sultan was involved in the epigraphic repertoire of this particular mosque.

The *Jalī Thuluth* Panel in the Library of Ahmed III

This is one of the panels discussed above bearing a Turkish poem. It is in overlaid gold and located in the eastern corner of Ahmed III's library in the Topkapı Palace (Fig.10).[336] It informs the reader that this corner of the library was dedicated to the study of the science of *hadith* (*'ilm-i hadīth*). Although it is unsigned, and unrecorded in his *Dīwān,* it was clearly composed by Ahmed III since it refers to the author having built the library. With this innovative panel, composed for a specific place, the eastern corner of his library, and a specific purpose, the reading of the *Qur'an* and the *hadith,* for the first time an Ottoman sultan, as a calligrapher, wrote and composed an inscription that declared his faith and expressed his hope for divine intercession.

[335] Sülün, (2006), p.510
[336] Yenal, (1949), p.88

Fig.10 The *Jalī Thuluth* Panel in the Library of Ahmed III

III.1.5.b. Mosques

The *ra's al-ḥikmat makhāfat-allāh* panel in the Ayasofya Mosque

The Ayasofya Mosque, regarded as the leading symbol of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, now İstanbul, continuously received huge amounts of endowment income (*Ayasofya evkāfı*) from the Ottoman ruling class and royal gifts.

According to Müstakimzāde, Sultan Murād III (r.1546-1595) was the first Ottoman sultan who placed calligraphic panels in the Ayasofya Mosque. He is reported to have sent two panels, one bearing the *shahādah* (declaration of Islamic faith) and the other a *Quranic* verse, to be placed on either side of the mihrab.[337]

Ahmed III's brother, Mustafa II, who sent five of his calligraphic panels to mosques and mausoleums,[338] sent a sixth to the Ayasofya Mosque which is still in situ (Fig.11).

Figure 11 : The *Jalī Muhaqqaq Basmala* of Sultan Mustafa II in the Ayasofya Mosque

[337] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.516. For a short survey on the calligraphic panels of the Ayasofya Mosque see; Kumbaracılar, (1970), pp.74-77

[338] TIEM 2722, 2723, 2369, 2775, and 2784.

Ahmed also presented a panel to the Ayasofya Mosque, a *jalī thuluth ra's al-ḥikmat makhāfat-allāh* (Fig. 12). This is an overlaid gold copy of an unknown ink original. In an interesting placement, he located his panel directly above his brother's

Fig. 12 The *Jalī Thuluth Ra's al-Hikmat makhāfat-allāh* Panel of Ahmed III in the Ayasofya Mosque

The purpose and nature of Ahmed III's presentations were different from that of both Mustafa II and Murād III. As discussed above, by locating his large calligraphic panels, which were legible from a distance, Ahmed III aimed to gain sympathizers among the orthodox *'ulemā* and pious crowds. His choice of texts suggests that he considered calligraphic panels to be message boards from which he could reinforce his religious leadership in the eyes of the Muslim community.

Ottoman sultans continued to present calligraphy panels to this important mosque. In addition to those already mentioned, calligraphic panels executed by Sultan Mahmud II and Sultan Abdülmecid are still on display in this monument.

This may have inspired Ahmed III to locate one of his *jalī thuluth tevhīd* compositions above the entrance of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, the only gate in the entire palace that symbolically was an opening to true holiness and hope for paradise. A second *tevhīd* declaration written by the Sultan himself was located inside the same hall, while a third was sent to the Mausoleum of Hatice Turhan Vālide (TIEM,2725), Ahmed III's grandmother, attached to the Yeni Cāmii complex.

The *Ra's al-ḥikmat makhāfat–allāh* panel in the Emetullah Gülnuş Vālide Mosque

This overlaid gold panel is identical to the one Ahmed III placed in the Ayasofya Mosque. The Sultan himself must have presented it to his mother's mosque in Üsküdar (Fig.13).[339] It is located on the upper side of the right wall, facing west.

Fig.13 The *jalī thuluth Ra's al-ḥikmat makhāfat–allāh* panel in the Mosque of Emetullah Gülnūş Vālide Sultan

The *jalī thuluth* panel in the Mosque of Emetullah Gülnūş Vālide Sultan is signed with the pear-shaped signature of the Sultan, "Ahmed bin Mehemmed *Hān*" and dated 1136 A.H. (1723 A.D.). The Sultan must have presented this panel to his mother's mosque after this date although there is no information in primary sources detailing the presentation of these calligraphic works to mosques. Rāşid Efendi, the chronicler, only notes that the Sultan visited the mosque following his mother's party in the Ayazma Garden, on Friday, in 16 *jamād al-awwal* 1123 (1710A.D.).[340]

[339] Rado notes that Ahmed III wrote four *Qur'an*s and gave them as presents. Two of them were sent to the tomb of the Prophet in Madina. The third one was given to the Sheikh of Kocamustafapaşa, Nūreddin Efendi, and the fourth one was a gift for the imam of Hāfiz Paşa Mosque, Veliyüddīn Efendi. (Rado, 1980, p.135)
[340] Rāşid, (1282), Vol:III, p.347

The *Al-Jannatu taḥt al-aqdām al-ummahāt* Panel in the Emetullah Gülnuş Vālide Mosque

By producing this panel, the text of which refers to paradise being under the feet of mothers, and situating it in his mother's mosque, the Sultan was demonstrating his sincere respect for his mother and motherhood in general.

The location of two of Ahmed III's calligraphic panels in his mother's mosque can be paralleled with a similar instance that took place almost three centuries earlier. In 1418, the Timurid prince Baysunghur designed a monumental dedicatory inscription for the main *iwan* of the mosque at Mashhad built by his mother, Gawharshad.[341] Baysunghur's public program of calligraphy seems predictable and he appears to have been one of the first members of any ruling Perso-Islamicate elite to have done so.[342] I believe that the resemblance between Baysunghur and Ahmed III was not random. Ahmed III was well aware of Baysunghur's dedicatory inscription in the Mosque of Gawharshad and by locating his inscriptions in his own mother's mosque he identified himself as a modern day reflection of Baysunghur.

The *jalī thuluth ra's al-ḥikmat makhāfat-allāh* panel in the Küçük Mecidiye Mosque

Ahmed III's great grandson, Sultan Abdülmecid (r.1839-61), presented a third overlaid gold copy of the *jalī thuluth ra's al-ḥikmat makhāfat-allāh* panel to the Küçük Mecidiye Mosque in Beşiktaş. It is identical to those that must have been presented by Ahmed III to both the Ayasofya Mosque and his mother's mosque. The Küçük Mecidiye Mosque panel was later brought to the Museum of the Turkish Pious Endowments–Arts of Calligraphy, in İstanbul, where it is found today (Fig.14).

[341] Hillar and the Princely Vision, (Exh. Cat. 1989), p.81
[342] Roxburgh, (2005), p.73

Fig.14 The *jalī thuluth* panel of Sultan Ahmed III, Turkish Pious Endowments Arts of Calligraphy Museum

The Küçük Mecidiye Mosque was built by Sultan Abdülmecid in 1848. The presentation of this panel by Sultan Abdülmecid exemplifies the fact that calligraphic panels of Ahmed III were relocated in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Ahmed III's *ra's al-ḥikmat makhāfat-allāh* panel must have been much admired since there is even a marble copy that was found in the Topkapı Palace. Unfortunately, neither its carver nor its original location is known. Today it is located on the right end of the third courtyard of the Topkapı Palace (Fig.15).[343]

Fig.15 The *Jalī Thuluth* Marble Panel, *ra's al-ḥikmat makhāfat-allāh* signed by Sultan Ahmed III, Carved on Marble, Topkapı Palace

The *Jali Thuluth al-jannatu taḥt-i aqdām al-ummahāt* Panel in the Mihrişah Sultan Mosque

[343] It does not have an inv. number.

A *jalī thuluth al-jannatu taḥt-i aqdām al-ummahāt* panel in overlaid gold in the Turkish Pious Endowments and Calligraphy Museum (Fig.16) was, according to the accounts of the museum, brought there from the mosque of Mihrişah Sultan in Halıcıoğlu, İstanbul.

Since this royal mosque was built before the reign of Ahmed III, it can be assumed that the Sultan himself presented this panel to the mosque.

Fig.16 The *jalī thuluth* panel of Sultan Ahmed III brought to the Turkish Pious Endowments Arts of Calligraphy Museum from the Mosque of Mihrişah Sultan in Halıcıoğlu, İstanbul.

The *jalī thuluth addi farāiḍ'allāhi takun muṭ i'an* panel in the Şehzāde Mosque

The *jalī thuluth addi farāiḍ'allāhi takun muṭ i'an* panel is an overlaid gold copy of an unknown ink original. It is on display in the Şehzāde Mosque, a structure built for Sultan Süleyman I by his architect, Sinan, between 1543 and1548 in the name of his beloved son, Şehzāde Mehmed (Fig.17).[344]

Fig.17 The *jalī thuluth 'Addi farāi ḍ'allāhi takun muṭ* n Ahmed III in the Şehzāde Mosque

[344] Kuban, (1994), p.152

A second identical overlaid gold panel (TIEM 2800) is found among the holdings of the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum in İstanbul. Its provenance is unrecorded.

The text of this panel, which advises the reader to obey the commands of God in order to become His obedient servant, implies that it was created for specific placement in a mosque. In this case, as in many others, the panel format enabled Ahmed III to attach his message to a highly important monument in his capital.

The *Jalī Thuluth Al-najāt fi al-Ṣidq* Panel in the Şehzāde Mosque

A second *jalī thuluth* panel bearing the inscription *Al-Najāt fi al-Ṣidq* (Salvation comes with devotion), written in black ink, was originally also located in the Şehzāde Mosque; however, it was brought to the Turkish Pious Endowments and Calligraphy Museum in 2008 (Fig.18) (TVHSM, Inv. No.2125)[345].

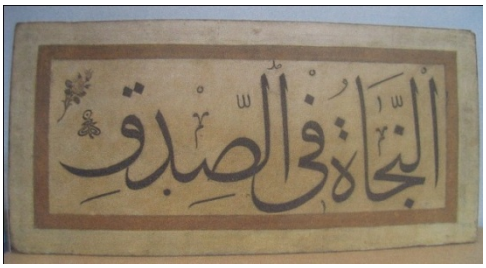

Figure 18 The *Jalī Thuluth al-najāt fi al-sidq* Panel by Sultan Ahmed III

The *Jalī Thuluth Basmala* Panel in the Zeynep Sultan Mosque

The *jalī thuluth basmala* panel by Ahmed III, written in ink, in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, İstanbul (TIEM 2768), is among the Sultan's masterpieces (Fig.19).

[345] Dr. Zübeyde Cihan Özsaylı, director of The Turkish Pious Foundations Calligraphic Arts Museum, drew my attention to this panel.

Figure.19 The *Jalī Thuluth Basmala* Panel of Ahmed III in Ink

This calligraphic panel was brought to the museum from the Mosque of Zeynep Sultan, on 14th December 1913.[346] According to the museum accounts, the panel had been on display in the Mosque of Zeynep Sultan for one hundred and forty four years, between 1769 and 1913. This mosque was built for Zeynep Sultan, one of Ahmed III's daughters, and was completed in 1769, thirty three years after Ahmed's death in 1736.[347] Zeynep Sultan must have presented this *jalī thuluth basmala* panel created by her father to her mosque as a memento.

The *jalī thuluth basmala* panel from the Zeynep Sultan Mosque was then recreated in an overlaid gold copy (TIEM 2721). Although the original location of this copy is unknown, it is today preserved in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, İstanbul (Fig.20). The museum accounts record that the panel arrived there from the Museum of Archeaology on 12th March 1914.

Fig.20 *Jalī Thuluth Basmala* by Sultan Ahmed III

The *Jalī Thuluth Basmala* Panel in the Selīmiye Mosque, in Üsküdar

[346] I would like to thank Mr. Ali Serkan Demirkol who drew my attention to the relevant pages of the inventory-book of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul.
[347] Gültekin, (1994), p.551

The Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts in İstanbul has a third *jalī thuluth basmala* panel (TIEM 2799) by Ahmed III (Fig.21), bearing the pear-shaped signature of the Sultan, "Ahmed bin Mehemmed *Hān*". While also a copy in overlaid gold, it is not originally based on the *jalī thuluth basmala* panel from the Zeynep Sultan Mosque (TIEM 2768). Unfortunately, the original written in ink from which it derives is unknown.

Fig.21 ***Jalī Thuluth Basmala*** **by Sultan Ahmed III**

This panel is different from the Zetnep Sultan *basmala* panel and its gold copy in that it displays a shortened version of the letter *sī n* in the '*bism*.' According to the museum accounts, this panel arrived there from the Mosque of Selīmiye in Üsküdar, on 30th September 1915. The Mosque of Selīmiye, built by Sultan Selīm III (r.1789-1807) in 1806, was part of the Selīmiye barracks complex dedicated to the new army, the so-called *nizām-ı cedīd* (new order).[348]

The Ottoman chronicler Tayyār-zāde Ahmed 'Atā Bey notes that the earliest signs of the foundation of Selīm III's new, 'Europeanized' army finds its roots under Ahmed III.[349] Indeed, the idea of a project to found a modernized military force was introduced to Ahmed III by his grand-vizier, Damat İbrahim Paşa, with a book, *Fenn-i Muharebe ve Ta'lim* (*The Science of War and Drill*), written by İbrahim Müteferrika, the founder of the Ottoman printing press. According to Tayyar-zāde, Ahmed III accepted the idea of the project and a military force, consisting of three hundred soldiers, began their new practices in the Haydar Paşa barracks.[350] Selīm III

[348] Kuban, (2007), p.555
[349] Konyalı, (1976), p.347
[350] Kuban, (2007), p.555

must have presented this *jalī thuluth basmala* panel composed by his grandfather to his mosque to commemorate Ahmed III.

III.1.5.c. Mausoleums

Royal Mausoleums

The *jalī thuluth addi farāiḍ'allāhi takun muṭ i'an* panel in the Mausoleum of Vālide Hatice Turhan Sultan

There are two overlaid gold copies of the *addi farāiḍ'allāhi takun muṭ i'an* panel by Ahmed III. The first one, as discussed above, is still found in situ at the Şehzāde Mosque in İstanbul. The second identical copy (TIEM 2800) is in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, İstanbul (Fig.22).

Fig.22 *Jalī thuluth addi farāi ḍllāhu takun mu ṭ'an* Panel by Sultan Ahmed III

According to the museum accounts the *addi farāiḍ'allāhi takun muṭ i'an* panel came from the Mausoleum of Vālide Sultan - Yeni Camii, on 21 December 1913. Important to note is that Ahmed III was buried in this mausoleum. He had built a library next to the Mausoleum of Vālide Sultan, itself attached to the Yeni Mosque, in 1724 and endowed it with 1206 manuscripts.[351] This panel may have been placed in the mausoleum to commemorate the calligrapher sultan, who had been in the habit of sending his calligraphic panels to mausoleums as royal gifts.

[351] Yenal, (1949), p.86

The *Jalī Thuluth Tevhīd* Panel in the Mausoleum of Vālide Hatice Turhan Sultan

The *jalī thuluth tevhīd* panel (TIEM 2725) in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, İstanbul, a copy in overlaid gold from a lost original, is among the finest works of Ahmed III (Fig.23). According to the museum accounts, this panel was originally placed in the mausoleum of Turhan Vālide Sultan, Ahmed III's grandmother. This panel and its importance is discussed further below.

Fig.23 The *jalī thuluth tevhīd* formula by Sultan Ahmed III

Sufi Mausoleums

The *jalī thuluth ḥasbī allāhu wa ni'm al-wakīl* panel in the Mausoleum of Baba Cāfer

Of the Sultan's calligraphic panels which were placed within mausoleums, the *ḥasbī allāhu wa ni'm al-wakīl* panel in *jalī thuluth* holds a special place (Fig.24).

Figure 24 . The *Jalī Thuluth* Panel by Sultan Ahmed III, Originally Located in the Mausoleum of Baba Cāfer, İstanbul.

The accounts of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts record that this panel was brought there on July 14th, 1920, from the Mausoleum of Baba Cafer in the district of Zindankapı, İstanbul.[352] The presentation of this panel to the Mausoleum of Baba Ca'fer is an indication of Ahmed III's loyalty to this pre-Ottoman saintly figure. Baba Ca'fer, a well-known *sūfî* leader, was born in Baghdad in the second half of the 8th century; he was among the spiritual leaders of the *siddiqiyyah* order of sufism.[353] It was no coincidence that his mausoleum, considered to be of less significance than others in İstanbul, was the site for Ahmed's skilfully illuminated calligraphic panel. It was common legend amongst the population of İstanbul that someone who endowed a *Qur'an* manuscript or a scribe's box to the Mausoleum of Ca'fer Baba would easily advance in the practice of calligraphy.[354] Ahmed III's presentation of his *ḥasbī allāhu wa ni'm al-wakīl* panel to this very mausoleum must have been related to this local custom and his own desire to advance his calligraphic skills.

The *Fa a'lama innahu lā ilāha illa Allāh* Panel in the Mausoleum of Mustafa *Devātī*

The *jalī thuluth Fa a'lama innahu lā ilāha illa Allāh*[355] panel in overlaid gold from an unknown original by Ahmed III is in the Mausoleum of Şeyh Mustafa Devātī (d.1659), in Üsküdar, İstanbul (Fig.25).

Fig.25 The *jalī thuluth faallama innahu lāilaha illa-allāh* panel by Sultan Ahmed III in the Mausoleum of Şeyh Mustafa Devātī, Üsküdar, İstanbul

[352] I got this information from the database of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul. I would like to thank Mr. Ali Serkan Demirkol, keeper of Ottoman collections, for his assistance.
[353] Koz, (1993), p.515
[354] Ibid, p.515
[355] The *Qur'an*, 47/19. 'One must know, no doubt, there is no God but *Allah*'

According to Müstakimzāde, the Sultan originally placed this panel at the Derwish-lodge of Tercüman Yūnus, in Üsküdar, İstanbul, after the lodge's restoration.[356] It was probably moved to the Mausoleum of Mustafa Devātī in 1896, following the re-arrangement of the mausoleum by Hüseyin Hakkı Bey's wife, Fatma Zehra Hanım.[357]

Şeyh Mustafa *Devātī* (d.1659) was one of the officially ordained assistants of Şeyh Aziz Mahmud Hüdāī.[358] The nickname of Şeyh Mustafa, "Devātī" (inkwell-maker), provides an explanation for why this particular panel was relocated to his mausoleum. The Mausoleum of Mustafa Devātī, like that of Ca'fer Baba, is part of a group of mausoleums of individuals who are directly related to the art of calligraphy.

The Mausoleum of Mustafa Devātī already had a collection of significant courtly gifts and relics before the arrival of this *jalī thuluth* panel. Mehmed IV (r.1648-1687) presented a *qadam* panel (a panel in the form of the footprint of Prophet Muhammad) and a key to the Ka'ba to the Şeyh of the Hüdāī Dervish-lodge, Mehmed Tālib Efendi (d.1679), the son of Şeyh Mustafa Devātī; Mehmed Tālib Efendi then placed these relics in his father's mosque.[359] The panel of Ahmed III could possibly have been placed in the Mausoleum of Mustafa Devātī with regard to this event.

The *Jalī Thuluth* Turkish Poem Reported to have been in the Mausoleum of Nefes Baba

Ali Emīrī Efendi (d.1912), who transcribed the *Dīwān* of Ahmed III, notes that in 1127, on his way to Morea (in the modern country of Greece), Sultan Ahmed visited the Mausoleum of Nefes Baba, a *Bektaşī* saint, near a region called 'Ferecik'. Ali Emīrī makes this note next to a Turkish poem written by the Sultan, and states that during his visit Ahmed III composed a poem in praise of Nefes Baba and placed it on one of the walls of the mausoleum.[360] If this is true, the Sultan must have visited this

[356] Müstakimzāde, 1928, p.79
[357] Haskan, 2001, p.635
[358] Konyalı, Vol:I, (1976), p.345
[359] Aydın, (2004), p.122
[360] Ahmed III, p.10

mausoleum in April 1715 when he went to Edirne to encourage the campaign against the Venetians.[361] The inscription has unfortunately disappeared but the nature of the poem, and the fact that it may have been put on the wall of the mausoleum, is note-worthy. The poem reads;

‘Rūhundan istiānet edüb eylerim recā

Ārām-i cān-i zārım i çün bir N

Geldi ümmīd-i himmet edub āsitānına

Hān Ahmed, ey behīn güher-i tāc-i evliyā’

Begging your spirit, I kindly ask

A breath of peace for my weeping soul

Hoping for grace, Sultan Ahmed came to your threshold

Oh you! The jewel in the crown of saints.

This poem is of great significance in terms of deepening our understanding of Ahmed III’s relationship with different *sufi* orders. Nefes Baba, as his title *Baba* suggests, was one of the spiritual leaders of the *Bektaşī* order, followed by the Ottoman janissary troops. The Sultan’s poem, full of respect and praise for Nefes Baba, declares a close spiritual affinity to the *Bektaşī* order. Specific terms used by the Sultan in the poem refer to his profound knowledge of the *Bektaşī* literary tradition, since praying via a saint’s (*Baba*’s) spirit was one of the essential methods of prayer in this tradition.

In addition to those works listed above, other lost calligraphic works by Ahmed III are referred to by Hüseyin Ayvansarāy ī, the eighteenth-century Ottoman historian famous for his *magnum opus* on the mosques of İstanbul, *Hadīkatü’l Cevāmi’* (Garden of Mosques). Ayvansarāy ī notes that ‘t

[361] Uzunçarşılı, (1956), p.103

Ahmed III in the Mosque and Mausoleum of Eyyūb al-Ansārī', in İstanbul, which was partly restored during the reign of the Sultan.'[362] Unfortunately, there is no description of these works in *Hadīkatü'l Cevāmi'*, which must have been placed in the Eyub Mosque following its restoration, like the case of the Dırağman Mosque.

III.1.6. Design and Sources of Inspiration

III.1.6.a. Script

The calligraphic panels of Ahmed III display unity in their type of script: all his panels are written in bold, well-proportioned *jalī thuluth*. It was a deliberate decision by the Sultan to employ *thuluth* for his panels and no other calligraphic style as *thuluth*, "the mother of scripts", has been the first choice for epigraphic "display" in Islamic calligraphy since the Abbasid period.[363] Schimmel correctly states that "*thuluth* remained the ideal style for epigraphy and was used on virtually every material and everywhere"[364]. As the practice of Ahmed III reveals, *thuluth,* with its eye-catching, rounded forms, was the most suitable style for calligraphy on the panel format.

III.1.6.b. European Elements

The creation of the panel format and its use for calligraphy has been the subject of scholarly debate. Blair remarks that "the taste for such (calligraphic) wall panels seems to have been a local adaptation of the European tradition of painted canvases that developed at a time when Ottoman artists introduced other innovations from European art, such as landscape scenes painted on the walls of palaces and houses".[365]

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[362] Ayvansarāyī , (2001), p.339
[363] Serin, (1982), p.45 Also see; Alparslan, (2009), p.34
[364] Schimmel, (1984), p.25
[365] Blair, (2007), p.500

The Sultan's regular use of the panel format went hand in hand with the artistic innovations of the period. With the new interest in all things European at the Ottoman court, he had his calligraphic panels surrounded with European decorative elements, such as their frames and illumination. The Sultan's *jalī thuluth 'ḥasbī Allāhu wa ni'm al-wakīl'* panel (TIEM 2714; cat. 1), for instance, features an unexpectedly Europeanized, almost naturalistic, floral border illumination, as opposed to the local interpretation of Euoprean elements in use. This change in decorative style appeared as part of a planned programme that saw the inclusion of European decorative elements into all types of Ottoman ornamentation.

Calligraphy itself remained free from European influence and preserved its local nature both during and after the reign of Ahmed III. However, it was due to the personal contribution of the Sultan that the panel format gained a new function akin to that of framed European paintings. Ahmed III's interest in panels can be related to the arrival of European painters, like Jean Baptiste Vanmour (d.1737), to the Topkapı Palace.[366] It is most likely that the Sultan considered calligraphy panels as serving an equivalent decorative purpose as European paintings.

While achieving popularity in the Ottoman Empire, calligraphic panels did not exist in Iran in this period as an alternative format to manuscripts and albums. The earliest known panels written in Persian calligraphy are the *hilye*-panels[367] bearing portraits of the Prophet and panels penned in the *ghol-zār* technique, both dating from the early nineteenth century.[368] In this respect, the increasing use of panels in the eighteenth century as an alternative calligraphic format in Ottoman practice represents a departure from the common body of traditional Turko-Persian calligraphic taste. In their seventeenth-century panels, however, the calligraphic proportion and order of letters do not possess the same perfection and finish that is observed in contemporary Ottoman manuscripts and albums. It was only in the eighteenth century that the panel format was well-established and became wide-spread among calligraphers.

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[366] For further information on the arrival of Vanmour to the court of Ahmed III and his works see; Gül Irepoğlu, *Jean Baptiste Vanmour – An Eye-witness of the Tulip Era*, Istanbul, 2003.
[367] Vernoit, (1997), p.65. Also see; Safwat, (1996), p.69
[368] Blair, (2007), p.452

III.1.6.c. Timurid-Turkman and Safavid Elements

The design of Ahmed III's calligraphic panels display revivalist approaches, primarily inspired by the calligraphic works of Timurid-Turkman and Safavid masters found in the albums preserved in the imperial treasury of the Topkapı Palace.[369] Rāşid Efendi specifically states that the Sultan examined these works on a regular basis.[370] Timurid, Aqqoyunlu and Safavid calligraphic albums from the Imperial collection contain outstanding calligraphic works executed by courtly calligraphers. Among the most important are the Timurid-era Baysunghur Album (TKSK-H.2152) and the *Mecmā'u'l Acāib* (IUK, F.Y.1423), the Aqqoyunlu Ya'qub Beg albums (TKSK-H.2153 and H.2160), and the Safavid Bahram Mirza Album (TKSK-H.2154).[371]

Ahmed III's revivalist approach suggests that he was aspiring to reach the same cultural standard set by the Timurid household and Timurid princes, whom he especially admired for their contribution to calligraphy.[372] The rich history section in Ahmed III's library, which included no less than four hundred[373] manuscripts, proves that he was well aware of the artistic and intellectual qualities of the Timurid princes, glorified by Timurid historians, including 'Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī's praising accounts of the calligrapher Prince Baysunghur (d. 1433), b. Shahrukh b. Timur.[374]

Ahmed III's was very keen on the quality of his work's illumination and, taking an example by some Timurid sultans, personally supervised master illuminators. [375] The

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[369] This important collection was distributed among three Istanbul libraries after the formation of the Turkish Republic.
[370] Rashid V, (1865), pp.128-129.
[371] Roxburgh, (2005), pp.85-149 and pp.181-245. Also see; Çağman, (1981), pp.31-36.
[372] The Ottoman elites' interest in the Timurid style goes back to the time of the Timurid sultan Husain Baiqara. The Ottoman interest in the revitalisation of the Timurid arts of the book dates at least from the early seventeenth century. One of the most interesting sets of miniatures dating from this period is from a copy of the *Tercüme-i Umdet al-Müluk*, by Emir Hācib Aşık Timur, commissioned by Ahmed I (r.1603-1617), which includes 164 miniatures featuring direct borrowings from Timurid and Turcoman models. See; Artan, (2006), p.420.

[373] Karatay, (1966), vol: III, pp.338-580.
[374] Roxburgh, (2005), p.39
[375] Rado, (1980), p.134

Diwān-i Husaynī (collected poems of Timurid Sultan Husayn Bayqara) dated 1492, in the Topkapı Palace (TSML E.H. 1636), has a page showing its author in his studio with the artisans.[376]

In both the cases of Baysunghur and Ahmed III, for instance, the impetus to produce a library stemmed from accepted ideas about what a prince should own. Even though such collected books were available to a limited audience, they still provided a means of embodying both Baysunghur's and Ahmed III's self-image.[377] This interest in the Timurid style during the reign of Ahmed III can also be observed in the revival of a Timurid-Turkmen style of arabesque motifs that permeated the carved decoration of eighteenth-century fountains in İstanbul.[378]

III.1.6.d. Individual panels

The *Jalī Thuluth Basmala* (TIEM 2768)

The *basmala* panel[379] (TIEM 2768) in ink features an important characteristic, indicating a direct transition from calligraphy from a manuscript or album page to that on a panel surface. This characteristic element is the extended connector (*keşīde*) between *sin* and *mim* in the first three letters of the *basmala*, '*bism*,' which looks like a long suspension bridge (Fig.26).

Fig.26 . The *jalī thuluth basmala* panel in ink by Sultan Ahmed III

[376] **Uluç, (…), p. 45**
[377] Roxburgh, (2005), p.41. Rashid Efendi, the chronicler, provides detailed information on the Sultan's sincere interest in his library and its holdings. See; Rāşid, Vol:IV (1865), pp:128-131, also see; Rāşid, Vol:V (1865), pp:176-177.
[378] Hamadeh, (2004), p.235
[379] See, cat. no.3

This extension was first applied to the *basmala* intentionally by the Abbasid calligrapher Ibn al-Bawwāb (d.1022).[380] Ibn al-Bawwāb elongated the letter *sin* of the *basmala,* thus lengthening it to fill the entire first line of the text. By doing so he maintained perfect harmony in the page setting. Although creating his composition on a larger scale, Ahmed III has preserved the same extension in his *basmala* panel (TIEM 2768). Although it may appear that the extension loses its original function in the panel format, the Sultan purposefully preserved it since the extended *basmala* was very well suited to the rectangular panel format. From the late eighteenth century, calligraphers have continued to use the extended *basmala* on panels to provide what I term a breathing space, particularly in *jalī thuluth* and *jalī nasta'līq* scripts, which allows for a break in the compression of the '*sīn*' and '*meem*'. The roots of this application will be discussed below. Over time, the extension of *sin* has even become a basic aesthetic feature of *jalī basmala*s, breaking the monotony of the round letters *nun* and *ra* and creating a contrast with the juxtaposed verticals of the letters *alif* and *lam*.

This extension of the *sī n* of the *basmala* has always formed a basis for interpretation in *Quranic* commentaries (*tefsīr*), and this may also be applied to the interpretation of this *basmala* panel of Ahmed III. In *sufi* traditional literature, every letter of the *basmala* is regarded as a sign; the letter *bā* symbolizes *bahā-Allāh* (merit of God), the letter *sī n* refers to *thanā-Allāh* (praise of God), the letter *mī m* indicates *mamlakat-Allāh* (property of God).[381] Using this interpretation, the extension of the *sī n* of the *basmala* has been seen as implying the continuation of *thanā-Allāh,* the praise of God. This may have been a connotation of the extended *sīn* desired by the Sultan as well.

Furthermore, the TIEM 2768 *basmala* panel has been calligraphed on brown paper and stuck on a wooden panel. It has not actually been framed, but an illuminated border of gold interlaced *rūmī*s and *saz* leaves acts as a frame. The panel is lavishly illuminated with elements from the classical Ottoman decorative repertoire, to such an extent that the wealth of illumination threatens to overwhelm the calligraphy. Unlike some of the other panels created by the Sultan, the illumination of this panel

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[380] Blair, (2006), p.164
[381] Yazır, (1971), vol:I, p.17

does not incorporate any European elements. Instead, the entire surface is filled with floral and leaf designs in different tones of gold in the *halkārī* style of illumination. Even the so-called 'eyes' of the letter *ḥa* in the words *Raḥmān* and *Raḥīm* have been filled in with gold. This application of gold within the *ḥa,* however, is not just part of the decoration of the panel but is part of a traditional procedure called *tam,* which means to complete. Used in this context it refers to the practice of filling in the 'eyes' of the letters containing them with coloured ink. Although *tam* was practiced since the era of the Abbasid calligraphy master Yāqūt al-Musta'simī (d.1298),[382] Ahmed III was the first to use this application in a calligraphic panel. It is interesting that the overlaid gold copy of this panel, TIEM 2721,[383] was not illuminated.

In the TIEM 2768 *jalī thuluth basmala* panel, just above the extension of the letter *sīn* is a *Quranic* quotation; *innahu mina's Sulaymān wa innahu*, with reference to *Sūrat al-Naml*, verse 30.[384] The text and the illumination above it resemble the form of a typical manuscript heading called *ta kçi tezhī* (the so-called crown illumination), which was commonly used on the frontispieces of Timurid, Turkman, Ottoman and Safavid manuscripts. Similar illuminated units resembling manuscript headings can also be seen in *firman*s surrounding the Sultan's hand-written confirmation (*hatt-ı hümāyūn*) of the decree. This similarity indicates a transition of decorative elements/styles from traditional frontispiece illuminations and *firman* decorations to the panel format.

The *Jalī Thuluth Tevhīd* Panel (TIEM 2725)

Ahmed`s *jalī thuluth tevhīd* panel (TIEM 2725)[385] is also exceptional in its design. He placed one of his own poems, in Turkish, as the frame of the *tevhīd*. The poem, divided between 16 cartouches, is written in *nasta'līq* script, surrounding the

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[382] Blair, (2007), p.246
[383] Cat. No:4
[384] The *basmala* appears with an extension in the thirtieth verse of *Sūrat al-Naml* that reads; "*innahu mina al-Sulaymān wa innahu b-ismi Allah al-raḥman al-raḥīm*" (It is from Solomon, and it says, In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy) [The *Qur'an*, trans. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, 2004, p.240].
[385] Cat. no:7

dominant *tevhīd* declaration in *jalī thuluth* (Fig.27). The Sultan's *nasta'līq* hand is masterly and shows crystalline control.

This is the Sultan's only panel in which he combined two different scripts, namely *thuluth* and *nasta'līq*. Combining and juxtaposing two or more different calligraphic types of the six pens to display calligraphic skills[386] became a traditional trick of Ottoman calligraphy, but appears to have first been used by Timurid calligraphers.[387]

Fig.27 . The *jalī thuluth tevhīd* panel by Ahmed III

The employment of minor calligraphic cartouches for enframing a major inscription first appeared in fifteenth-century Timurid Iran.[388] The earliest extant example of this application is found in the *Majma' al-'Ajāib* (IUK F.1423), the fifteenth-century album associated with the Timurid prince Baysunghur Mirza. A calligraphic composition consisting of four lines of Arabic prayers in bold *thuluth* from this album (fol. 66a-b) is framed by a Persian poem in proportionally smaller *nasta'līq*. The calligraphic albums in the İstanbul University Library, including this *Majma' al-'Ajāib*, were originally kept in the imperial library until the reign of Sultan Abdülhamīd II (r.1876-1908), when they were brought to the Yıldız Palace and were then transferred to the İstanbul University Library (IUK) in the 1920s. Therefore, the above-mentioned application in the *Majma' al-'Ajāib* might have inspired Ahmed III in his design of his *jalī thuluth tevhīd* panel (TIEM 2725).

Sixteenth-century Safavid calligraphers also favoured and improved upon this particular design of surrounding a main text with cartouches of smaller *nasta'līq*

[386] Michell, (2007), p.135
[387] Blair, (2007), p.420
[388] Ibid, p.432

inscriptions.[389] Ahmed III's application of the *nasta'līq* cartouches on the *tevhīd* panel is in fact closer to the design of Safavid album pages than that of Baysunghur Mirza's album. Ahmed III therefore appears to have been inspired by Safavid albums in the Imperial Library, such as the Amir Ghayb Beg Album[390] (TSM-H.2161), which includes many calligraphic specimens surrounded by cartouches of smaller *nasta'līq* inscriptions.

On Ahmed III's panel (TIEM 2725), he did not simply transfer an album-page format to a larger scale, but created a new design for panel formats by transforming the existing models. In Safavid *nasta'līq* album pages, the dominant inscription was also written in *nasta'līq,* at other times the *nasta'līq* cartouches surrounded a miniature. In Ahmed's panel the dominant inscription is *jalī thuluth*, and *nasta'liq* was employed only for decorative purposes. The employment of *nasta'līq* script in this panel indicates the ongoing interest in this script and its application on different media which shaped the epigraphic repertoire on contemporary public fountains, as well as palatial buildings, as exemplified by the walls of the Fruit Room of Ahmed III in the Topkapı Palace.

This raises the following questions: Why did Ahmed III employ the *nasta'līq* script particularly for his own poem and not anywhere else? And why didn't he use *nasta'līq* for any of his other calligraphic panels? The answers are found in the history of *nasta'līq* and its stylistic features. Müstakimzāde Süleyman Saadeddin Efendi states that, "...*nasta'līq* is, somehow, a made-up script that does not correspond to other established styles and therefore it belongs to a group of coded scripts".[391] The Sultan was certainly aware of the secondary nature of *nasta'līq* and thus he must have used it for his own poem as a sign of modesty. It was no coincidence that in his calligraphic panels of *Quranic* verses and *hadith*s, he employed *muhaqqaq* and *thuluth* but never *nasta'līq*. This must have been because of the existence of *hadith*s which stressed the necessity of clearly emphasizing the so-called "teeth" of the letter *sīn* when writing the *basmala*. In *nasta'līq* script,

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[389] Barakat, (2004), p.81. Also See; Safwat, (1996), pp.98-p, 110. Some Safavid album pages feature alternative designs in which each cartouche contains two lines of *nasta'liq*, in other words a couplet. See; Munich, (2010), p.61. Enframing cartouches of *nasta'liq* were also used in manuscripts. See; James, (1992), p.172.
[390] Roxburgh, (2005), p.223-9
[391] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.2

however, the teeth of the letter *sīn* are never shown,[392] which clearly made it unsuitable for religious inscriptions.

Although this is the sole instance of Ahmed's own calligraphy written in *nasta'līq,* the creation of a frame of cartouches containing poetry written in *nasta'līq* was not restricted to this single example. This framing device can also be seen on the lacquer binding of his *tughra* album (TSMK-A.3653). This lacquer binding, by the court illuminator Ahmed Hazīne[393] (d.1761), is dated 1723 and is framed by a poem in praise of the album, composed in *nasta'līq* within a series of cartouches. Similar *nasta'līq* cartouches of poetry run along the borders of lacquered bows and scribes' boxes produced by the court illuminator and lacquer master Ali Üsküdārī , who was responsible for the illumination and the binding of the *thuluth-muhaqaq* album (TSMK-A.3652) penned by Ahmed III.[394] These may have been modelled on seventeenth-century bows and scribes' boxes created at the Mughal court, which also bear cartouches containing verses in *nasta'līq*.[395]

The use of *nasta'līq* in the framing-cartouches of Ahmed III's *jalī thuluth tevhīd* panel (TIEM 2725), and on the lacquered objects mentioned above therefore appears to be inspired by a Mughal source. This possibility is rendered even more likely by that fact that the adviser and biographer of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, Abu'l Fazl, considered *nasta'līq* to be at the top of the Mughal calligraphic hierarchy.[396] As discussed above, the floral elements of the interior decoration in Ahmed's Fruit Room at the Topkapı Palace and the vases found among the carved reliefs of the public fountains built in his reign may also have been due to a Mughal inspiration.

The Mirrored (*Müsennā/aynalı*) *Jalī Thuluth Basmala* Panel (TIEM 2724)

The gold-overlaid mirrored *jalī thuluth basmala* panel[397] (TIEM 2724) from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts in İstanbul (Fig.28) is exceptional as it is the

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[392] See; Müstakimzāde, pp.2, 11-18.
[393] Derman, (2009), p.11
[394] Some of these works have been published by Gülnur Duran. [Duran, (2008), pp.128-9, 134-5].
[395] Michell, (2007), pp.148-9, 158-9.
[396] Michell, (2007), p.134
[397] Cat: no.11

Sultan's only mirrored composition. In addition, his pear-shaped signature on this panel reads: "*katabahu Ahmed Hān*" (Ahmed Khan wrote it) and not the usual "*Ahmed bin Mehemmed Hān*" (Ahmed son of Mehemmed *Hān*) found on the rest of his panels.

Fig. 28 The mirrored *jalī thuluth basmala* panel by Sultan Ahmed III

Mirrored compositions in Islamic calligraphy can be seen as early as during the reign of the Fatimids in Egypt. In the fifteenth century, Timurid calligraphers favoured this technique and created highly important pieces. The Timurid scholar Shams al-Dīn Muhammad b. Mahmud Āmulī mentioned mirrored designs (*muthannā* ar.) in calligraphy but did not describe the technique in detail.[398] Mirrored inscriptions with clear Timurid influence can be found in early Ottoman calligraphy and epigraphy. The late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the decline of the mirrored inscriptions, when this technique was almost forgotten. It was, however, revived by Ahmed III when he composed this mirrored panel, which also has the distinction of being the earliest extant example of a mirrored composition on a calligraphic panel.

Technically, in mirrored compositions the reflected side of the composition should not be created with the pen but should be copied from the original half via pouncing. In this particular instance, it is certain that first the legible left half was penned and the reflected right half was pounced afterwards.

The structural features of this panel are highly original and do not follow in the tradition of existing mirrored compositions. Traditionally, the right half of the

[398] Özcan, (2009), p.211

composition is written to be read while the left half is simply reproduced as its reflection. In this case, however, it is the opposite: the left half is readable and the right half is its reflection. This is an innovative application and remains unique to Ahmed III. In addition, in the classical Timurid and early Ottoman compositions, the positioning of letters (*silsile-i hurūf*) in *thuluth* script dictates that the reader should read from the lower right-hand corner to the upper left one, and that the sequence of words is also preserved. One of the most beautiful applications of this orientation and sequence is the triangular *jalī thuluth Quranic* verse above the portal of the Kılıç Ali Paşa Mosque, built in 1580 (Fig.29).

Fig.29 The mirrored *jalī thuluth* composition designed by the calligrapher Demircikulu Yusuf Efendi, located above the portal of the Kılıç Ali Paşa Mosque.

In Ahmed III's mirrored *basmala* panel there is no such sequence to the calligraphed words. When it is deciphered following the traditional lower right to upper left formula the panel reads: "*Bism - al-Ra ḥmān - al-Ra ḥīm - Allāh*". The name '*Allāh*' (God), the second word of the *basmala*, has been located after the last word 'al-Rahīm'; in order to juxtapose the divine names '*al-Ra ḥmān'*, '*al-Ra ḥīm'*, '*Allāh'*. With this design, the word '*Allah*' has been placed at the very top of the composition in the mirrored halves. This re-organization in the syllable-sequence of the *basmala* was also done to maintain an ideal contrast between the vertical letters (*alif*s and *lām*s) at the centre of the composition and the round letters (*mīm*s, *nūn*s, *rā*s) at both ends. The cursive endings of the letters *mīm*, *rā* and *nūn* have been placed atop each other, with a single dot located in each curve. The vertical *alif*s and *lām*s have been

juxtaposed and gathered at the center of the composition. The change in the order of the syllables of the *basmala* and the placement of the word '*Allah*' at the sides of the panel was purposefully done to maintain the continuity of the vertical shaftes of the letters '*alif*' and '*lam*.'*Allah* Until the end of the eighteenth century, such virtuosity in calligraphic design remained unique to Ahmed III.

During my research, an exciting discovery was made when I noticed that an identical mirrored *basmala* panel existed in ink, from the Great Mosque of Bursa (Fig.30). Unfortunately, the signature on this panel is heavily damaged and therefore illegible, but it could well be the Sultan's original, ink-written version of the overlaid gold panel version (TIEM 2724).

Fig.30 (Left) The Mirror-image *Basmala* Panel in the Great Mosque of Bursa.

(Right) The Mirrored *Jalī Thuluth Basmala* Panel by Sultan Ahmed III

As discussed above, in designing this panel the Sultan could have been inspired by the outstanding mirrored compositions in the Timurid albums preserved in the Imperial Treasury, but it just as likely that he found inspiration in the fifteenth-century Ottoman mirrored epigraphic inscriptions (*kitābe*). The *jalī thuluth* mirrored composition above the main entrance of the Topkapı Palace, composed by Ali al-Sūfī in the 1450s, is an early example which could not have escaped the Sultan's eye. However, due to the irregularity in his sequence, the Sultan's mirrored *basmala* is more closely related to the late Timurid mirrored designs than to the earlier

Ottoman compositions. An example of the former is a fifteenth-century album page, sold in Christie's sale rooms in London (Fig.31).[399]

Fig.31 (Left) The Mirrored *Jalī Thuluth Basmala* Panel by Sultan Ahmed III

(Right) The mirrored *thuluth* "*Qul kullun ya'malu 'ala shākiletih*" ("Say: Everyone acts according to his own disposition") composition, the *Qur'an - Sūrat al-Isra*: 84, 15th century.

Here, the mirrored composition reads, "*Qul kullun ya'malu 'ala shākiletih*"[400] and the sequence of words is also changed since the words *'ala* and *shākiletih* are shifted to the reflected side. In other words, only these two words are legible on the left half of the composition while the rest are legible on the right half. By doing this, the calligrapher has in fact located the word *'ala* to the very top of the composition in both the right and the left half. Since the word *'ala* can also read as 'Ali, this recalls Ahmed's placing the word *Allāh* on the very top of his composition, and suggests that the Sultan may have been inspired by a similar example.

The Sultan's primary source of inspiration must have been Timurid albums, particularly the Baysunghur Album (TSM-H.2152) from the Imperial Library. The arrival of the album at the Topkapı Palace is assumed to be related to the 1514 Tabriz campaign of Sultan Selīm I. The album contains one hundred and fourteen calligraphic examples, including specimens signed by master calligraphers including Yāqūt al-Musta'simī, Mubārak b. Qutb, Argūn al-Kāmilī, Ahmad al-Suhrawardī, 'Abdallah Maḥ mūd al-Ṣ ayrafī, Yahya b. Jamāl al-Ṣ ūfī and Muhammad b. Ḥaydar

[399] Christie's London, "Arts of the Islamic and Indian Worlds" Auction (Auction No.7715), 31 March 2009, Lot:137. Calligrapher is unknown. It has been catalogued as Ottoman Turkey, second half of the 15th century, measuring 37x29cm.
[400] The *Qur'an*, *Sūrat al-Isra*: 84

al-Ḥusaynī.[401] Most important for this discussion is the appearance of the seal[402] of Ahmed III, which indicates that this album had indeed been examined by the Sultan.

The *Jali Thuluth Fatabārakallāhu aḥsan al-khāliqīn* Panel (TSM.06-31655)

The *fatabārakallāhu aḥsan al-khāliqīn* panel stands apart from the rest of Ahmed's calligraphic works because it was created using white ink (Fig.32). A variety of coloured inks were used for calligraphy from the early Islamic period onwards,[403] and the Zīrīd prince al-Mu'izz ibn Bādis (1007-61) mentions red, yellow and green as the most important ink colours in his *Umdat al-kuttāb* (*Staff of the Scribes*).[404]

Fig.32 The *jalī thuluth* panel by Ahmed III in white ink

Here, the Sultan was possibly again inspired by the Timurid and early Ottoman calligraphic albums in the Topkapı Palace library, which include outstanding calligraphic examples composed in coloured inks. An example is the Safavid Bahram Mirza Album (TSM-H.2154), which includes two calligraphies by Sultan Muhammad Nūr written in white ink.[405] In addition, the aforementioned Baysunghur

[401] Roxburgh, (2005), p.38
[402] Çağman, (1981), p.32
[403] Schimmel, (1984), p.15
[404] Levy, (1962) p.21 Also see; Blair, (2007), p.62
[405] TSM-H.2154: Fol.83a. See; Roxburgh, (2005), p.260

Album (TSM-H.2152) contains polychrome calligraphic designs in which red, yellow, blue and green ink were employed in the same composition.[406]

The original layout of the *fatabārak allāhu aḥsan al-khāliqīn* panel may indicate further inspiration from earlier albums, as the text has been divided into two sections. The first part, *fatabāraka allāhu*, in *jalī thuluth,* has been placed in the centre of the composition. The second part, *aḥsan al-khāliqīn*, in much smaller *thuluth*, has been placed at the upper left hand corner of the panel. This type of text-division is found in Timurid calligraphic albums produced during the reign of Shāhrukh (r.1405-1447). A particular example is a *basmala* in *thuluth*, similarly divided into two sections, which is found among the assembled specimens in the Timurid album (TSM-B 411) in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library, signed by the scribe al-Hajj Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Musharrijī, and dated 761AH/1360AD (Fig.33).[407]

Fig.33 The *basmala* in two sections by al-Hajj Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Musharrijī

In both Ahmed's *fatabārak allāhu aḥsan al-khāliqīn* panel (TSM.06-31655) and the *basmala* from the Timurid album (TSM-K.B411), the section of smaller *thuluth* text in the upper left corner of the composition is located directly above the word "*Allāh*"

[406] Roxburgh, (2005), p.95

[407] Blair, (2007), p.259. An almost identical *basmala*, divided into two sections, is found in the opening double-page of Mamluk historian al-Tayyibī's album, the first album of calligraphic specimens to survive from the Arab world compiled by Muḥammad b. Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. 'Umār al-Tayyibī al-Shāfi'i, dated 12 Rajab 908/11 January 1503. This piece suggests that such applications were known to Mamluk calligraphers as well. However, in this case the calligraphic style is not *thuluth* but *tumar*, the largest of all the scripts, written according to the rules of both *thuluth* and *muhaqqaq*. See; Blair, (2007), p.317-352

(God).[408] This resemblance shows a direct link between the two works, suggesting an unquestionable impact of Timurid calligraphic albums on the art of Ahmed III.

The *Jalī Thuluth 'Fa'allama innahu lā ilāha illallāh'* Panel from the Mausoleum of Şeyh Mustafa *Devātī*, Üsküdar, İstanbul.

Traces of the Timurid style can also be observed in Ahmed III`s *fa'allama innahu lā ilāha illallāh* panel from the Mausoleum of Şeyh Mustafa *Devātī*, İstanbul. He has combined *ha*, the last letter of the word *Allāh*, with the didactical minor *ha* over it (Fig.34).

Fig.34 The *jalī thuluth* panel by Sultan Ahmed III in the Mausoleum of Mustafa Devātī, in Üsküdar, İstanbul.

Such tricky and unauthorized applications were favoured by late Timurid calligraphers as well. A similar application is found in the *muhaqqaq basmala*[409] of the Timurid calligrapher Assadullah Kirmānī (d.1486) (Figs.35a-b). He was an extremely important master of calligraphy, especially celebrated in the Ottoman world for having been the teacher of one of the most esteemed Ottoman calligraphers from the court of Sultan Süleyman I, Ahmed Karahisārī.

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[408] The reason of this application could be linked to the divine nature of the name "*Allāh*", also known as *lafẓ atallāh*. "*Allah*" is the first and foremost name among the 99 names of God in Islam (*Asmā' al-Ḥusnā*). The opening words, including "*Allāh*", could have been written in large size for this reason. Moreover, in both of these cases, the opening words, *bismillāh* (in the name of God) and *fatabārak-Allāh* (May God be blessed), have been written in a larger size (*jalī*) than the modifiers *al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* (the merciful the compassionate) and *Aḥsan al-Khāliqīn* (the beneficent of creators). Both of the opening words, written in a larger text size, are *Quranic* formulas of great importance, which praise God and form an important part of the tradition of *dhikr*.

[409] Ayverdi, (1953), p.24

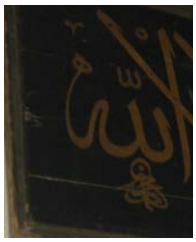

Fig. 35a Detail from the *jalī thuluth tevhīd* panel of Ahmed III in the Mausoleum of Mustafa *Devātī*

Fig.35b Detail from the *Muhaqqaq Basmala* of Assadullah Kirmānī with extended diacritical *Ha*

III.1.6.e. Copies of Works by Local Masters

Ahmed III's *jalī thuluth*, *ḥasbī Allāhu wa ni'm al-wakīl* panel (TIEM 2714), in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, İstanbul, is an identical copy of an album leaf[410] written by Mehmed Hocazāde (d.1694), signed and dated 1689 (Fig.36). Mehmed Hocazāde was one of the master calligraphers of the second half of the seventeenth century, who taught calligraphy in the Firūz Ağa Mosque.[411] He was one of the calligraphy teachers of Ahmed III's brother, Mustafa II, who generously supported Mehmed Hocazāde and once purchased a *Qur'an* manuscript from him for one thousand *gurūş*s.[412] Ahmed III was 21 years old when Mehmed Hocazāde died but as a young Prince was possibly impressed by the works of this celebrated master.

[410] Topkapı Palace Museum M.R. 1123. Istanbul, (1983) p.288. Also see; Çağman-Aksoy (1998), p.82
[411] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.479
[412] Ibid, p.479

Fig.36 The *jalī thuluth* ḥasbī *Allah*u wa ni'mal wakil by Ahmed III (left). The Same Verse by Mehmed Hocazāde (right)

In the realm of Islamic calligraphy, copying or replicating (*naql* ar.) works of celebrated masters was not considered to be forgery but instead was regarded as proof of mastery.[413] One of the earliest known documents regarding *naql* is a Timurid *arzadasht*[414] (TSM H.2153, fol.98a), which reports that the calligrapher Shams al-Dīn Muhammad Husām al-Harawī was making a facsimile of a treatise in the late Khwāja's ('Abdallah Ṣayrafī's) hand.[415] Ahmed III's *jalī thuluth*, *ḥasbī Allāhu wa ni'm al-wakīl* panel proves his involvement in this tradition. He might have copied this album page to prove his skills by imitating this master calligrapher.

However, a second interpretation is also possible. Traditionally, calligraphy students were asked to copy or imitate a selected work of a master before being awarded a scribe's diploma (*icāzetnāme*).[416] Although the calligraphy diploma of Ahmed III is unknown to us, this panel may have been one of a series of works he copied for this purpose.

Ahmed III actually copied Mehmed Hocazāde's album page twice. The second copy is an album page (TSM-A.3652) penned in red ink (Fig.37).

[413] Derman, (1970), p.717
[414] *Arzadasht* is a report from a Timurid atelier. This particular example is a progress report to Baysunghur Mirza from Ja'far Tabrīzī. See Thackston, (2001), p.43-46.
[415] Thackston, (2001), p.43
[416] Ibid, p.718

Fig.37 The *thuluth* album page by Ahmed III (Left). The original by Mehmed Hocazāde (Right)

Here, the location of the Sultan's pear-shaped signature is noteworthy. Imitating Mehmed Hocazāde, the Sultan placed his signature just above the cursive end of the last letter, *lam*, of the word *wakīl*. This word, in addition to its usage in the context of the *Quranic* verse, is one of the 99 names of God. *Al-Wakīl* means the Trustee, in other words, he who provides a means to solve all problems in the best way.[417] By locating his signature, "Ahmed bin Mehemmed *Hān*", above the cursive end of the last letter of *al-Wakīl*, the Sultan was symbolically expressing his wish for divine protection.

III.1.6.f. The Use of the *Zulfiqār*

The final outstanding feature of Ahmed III's approach to calligraphic design to be discussed is his use of symbols in his compositions. In the *Muhammad al-Hādī* panel a symbolic sign is hidden in the last letter, '*ya'*, of the word '*Hādi'*, placed at the top of the composition (Fig.38). Here, the letter '*ya'* was composed in the form of the *zulfiqār*, the famous two-bladed sword of the Prophet that he gave to his son in law, 'Ali.[418]

[417] Ninety-Nine Names of Allah, (Undated), p.53

[418] "According to the *Sunnī* tradition, *zulfiqār* was the sword of Al-'As ibn Munabbih Al-Hajjāj, the leader of a wealthy pagan community in Mecca, whose members did not accept Islam. When Al-Hajjaj was killed during the Battle of Badr in 624 AD, his sword was among the spoils of war won by the victorious Muslim army under the Prophet Muhammad. A year later, Muhammad was wounded and broke one of his front teeth during the Battle of Uhud, at which the Meccans defeated the Muslims. After the battle, Muhammad presented Ali with his ring and weapons, including the *zulfiqār*, as a reward for his courage and assistance." Tezcan, (2009), p.67.

Fig.38 The *jalī thuluth* panel of *Muhammad al-Hādī* by Sultan Ahmed III

The use of the *zulfiqār,* which had *hadith*s inscribed on it,[419] in Ahmed's panel is open to many readings. The Sultan`s attachment of the *zulfiqār* to the very title of *al-Hādī* (the guide) must be intentional. Furthermore, in the signature, the name 'Ahmed' is written within the incision made by the letter *dal*, the last letter of the name of the Prophet. By doing so, the Sultan has almost included himself within the whole composition, symbolically topped by the sword of 'Ali. In other words, this composition may be self-referential, denoting a Caliph-Sultan who lives and fights for the faith of the Prophet, both in life and symbolically with the sword of 'Ali.

The use of the *zulfiqār* as a symbol was common among the *batini*[420] *sufi* paths and was generally associated with the *bektaşī* order. The Ottoman janissaries, established in the fourteenth century, were loyal followers of 'Ali and frequently used the *zulfiqār* as one of the symbols (*remiz*) on their tombstones and standards.[421] By employing the *zulfiqār* in this composition, Ahmed III might have intended to give a political message to the viewer: his wish to maintain positive relations with the *bektaşī* janissaries. There is additional evidence supporting this hypothesis. As already mentioned, Ali Emīrī Efendi, who copied Ahmed's *Dīwān*, noted that when the Sultan visited the mausoleum of Nefes Baba, a *bektaşī* leader-saint, on his way to Morea, he composed a poem in praise of the saint and had it then placed on a wall of the mausoleum.[422]

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[419] Topuzoğlu, (1978), p.650
[420] *Bātiniyyah*, the school attributing special importance to the interpretation of the hidden meanings
[421] Tezcan, (2009), p.69
[422] *Dīwān*, (Millet Manuscript Library: Ali Emīrī, Manzum, No:529), p.10

III.2. Sultan Ahmed III's Monumental Inscriptions

Ahmed III's public program of monumental inscriptions consists of epigraphy located on buildings and public fountains. These works can be considered as visual commemorative monuments of his reign. Moreover, there is literary evidence supporting a comparison between architectural and calligraphic patronage. Just as the historian, Mustafa Āli, wrote about the buildings Suleyman the Magnificent constructed immediately after his various conquests, the contemporary Ottoman poet, Nedīm, noted Ahmed III's calligraphic works after his victory against Iran.[423]

In the history of Ottoman art, Ahmed III is the first and most prominent sultan whose calligraphic works were used for architectural and epigraphic purposes. He is the first sultan to adorn the Topkapı Palace with his own calligraphic works and is also the only one to inscribe foundation inscriptions on the public fountains and dervish lodges he commissioned.

This practice and placement was related particularly to the development of a new imperial image. As Hamadeh suggests, during the reign of Ahmed III a "new imperial image thrived on visibility and public display. As the veiled symbolism of old forms of imperial representation no longer seemed suitable, it is not surprising that models for the new imperial image may have been sought in other imperial traditions".[424] Ahmed III's self-involvement in the epigraphic programme of restored and recently built areas of the Topkapı Palace and monuments of İstanbul are to be seen as part of this new imperial representation. In addition, the Sultan was possibly inspired by early calligrapher-sultan figures, such as the Timurid Princes Baysunghur[425] b. Shahrukh, İbrahim b. Shahrukh[426] and the Aqqoyunlu Prince Ali[427] b. Sultan Khalil, each of whom designed monumental inscriptions.

Ahmed III's monumental inscriptions appear on gates and entrance halls of the Topkapı Palace, on the two imperial public fountains commissioned by him and his mother, and on dervish lodges. While most of these inscriptions were carved into

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[423] Faroqhi, (2005), p.139. Nedim, (1951), pp.133-135
[424] Hamadeh, (2004), p.234
[425] Togan, (1979), p.429
[426] Melikian-Chirvani, (1971), pp.24-26. Cited in: Ulu (2006), p.33
[427] Ibid, pp.34-35. Cited in: Ulu (2006), p.34.

marble, some of them were applied on tiles produced in the Tekfur Saray workshops in İstanbul.

III.2.1. Monumental Inscriptions in the Topkapı *Palace*

Five of Ahmed III's ten monumental inscriptions are located in the Topkapı Palace.

III.2.1.a. The Entrance of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet

The most significant monumental inscription in the Topkapı Palace is the Islamic declaration of God's unity (*tevhīd*), designed in *jalī thuluth* and carved above the main entrance of the *Hırka-i Saadet Dairesi* (the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet). In addition, two *tughra*-style compositions on panels were placed to either side of this entrance by Ahmed III, who was responsible for their composition as well.

Fig.39 The Entrance of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet (*Hırka-i Saādet Dāiresi*)

Ahmed III's monumental inscriptions on the entrance to the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet had both a decorative and sacred purpose (Fig.39).

As previously discussed, the Hall served as the sacred space of the Ottoman capital and was a symbol of power for the state and of divine grace for the ruler. It was the site where sultans acquired blessings before going to war. It was also considered a

place of protection; for example, just before the dethronement of Osman II when janissaries attacked the Topkapı Palace, members of the court took shelter in the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet.[428] The Mantle itself was held to be a sacred object, and Ahmed III too was aware of the importance of this spiritual shield and used it when necessary. He took the Holy Mantle out of the Hall with him on many occasions, including his trip to the district of Üsküdar just before the breakout of the Patrona Halil rebellion.[429]

Following the restoration of the Hall in 1725, Ahmed III had his *jalī thuluth tevhīd* declaration (Fig.40) carved above its entrance. His two *tughra*-shaped compositions on either side, both bearing the sultan's pear-shaped signature, must have been inscribed there in the same year.

Fig.40 The *jalī thuluth tevhīd* by Ahmed III, located above the entrance of Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet

The *jalī thuluth tevhīd* declaration of Ahmed III carved above the entrance of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet is not the first of its kind in the epigraphic repertoire of the Topkapı Palace. Similar *tevhīd* formulas, applied on marble plaques, were placed on arched gates of the Topkapı Palace in the seventeenth century. Among those, the *jalī thuluth tevhīd* declaration above the so-called *Bābüsselām*, the

[428] Sakaoğlu, (2003), p.229

[429] "According to chronicler Destārī Sālih Efendi, when the rebellion broke out Mufti Zülālī Efendi said: 'What are you afraid of? Thank God, we have the banner of the Prophet and the Mantle of the Prophet with us… Who on earth could ever beat us?' Many members of the Palace were convinced…" Destārī, (1962), p.5-11

Harem gate[430] and the Çeşmeli *Sofa* are noteworthy.[431] The Sultan was clearly inspired by these early works; however, the location of Ahmed III's panel, in the heart of this sacred Hall, may imply a wish to stress his own piety. The wording of this marble panel is mirrored by an almost identical gold overlaid *tevhīd* formula on a wooden calligraphic panel penned and signed by Ahmed III (TSM-HSD 21/200), located inside the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet (Fig.41).

Fig.41 The *Jalī Thuluth Tevhīd* gold overlaid Panel by Ahmed III in the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet (TSM-HSD 21/200); on the right the *jalī thuluth tevhīd* by Ahmed III, located above the entrance of Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet

The only difference between the carved *tevhīd* composition above the entrance of the Hall and the wooden calligraphic panel placed within it is the lengthened connection on the exterior marble panel between the letters *ha* and *mīm* in the word 'Muḥ ammad.' This extra length is clearly related to placement of the marble panel over the rounded arch of the Hall entrance, as it divides the composition into two equal parts that perfectly balance the form below. A unique feature observed in the carved *tevhīd* composition above the Hall entrance is the signature in the form of a *tughra*. This is the only monumental example in which the Sultan used the *tughra* form for his signature instead of his classical pear-shaped one. The only other calligraphic work Ahmed III signed with a *tughra*-signature is found within the *Imperial Tughra Album* (TSMK A.3653, fol.5b).

[430] The *jalī thuluth tevhīd* declaration above the entrance of the Harem complex is dated 1077A.H. (1666 A.D.)
[431] See; Sülün, (2006), p.94, 95.

The reason for using this particular style of signature in this instance is related to the content of the *tevhīd*, the traditional nature of the *tughra* itself and its location. Ahmed III placed the *tughra* signature not below the middle of the composition, but in its lower left-hand area, just under the word '*Allāh'*. Symbolically, this application represents Sultan Ahmed, as a follower of the holy law, taking shelter in the shadow of '*Allāh'* by placing his calligraphic sign under the wings the founder of the law.

In this work, the distance between the letters, the proportions of the vertical and rounded letters, and the 'fillings' above the words 'Muhammad' and '*rasūl'* are perfect in their calligraphic design. This shows that the widely-held view of Mustafa Rakım (d.1827), the court scribe of Mahmud II, Ahmed III's grandson, as the founder of the '*jalī* school' can be challenged. Instead, the roots of the *jalī* school must be searched for in the works of Ahmed III.

The celebrated *jalī thuluth* compositions of Rākım, like other famous nineteenth-century scribes, were clearly influenced by the works of Sultan Ahmed III. This is based on their application of the rules of individual panel composition established by the sultan. However, the impact of his works on later nineteenth-century calligraphers and their *jalī* compositions has so far been overlooked.

The two *tughra*-shaped compositions (Fig.42, 43), one on either side of the arched entrance to the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet are exceptionally significant since their placement was part of a new epigraphic application and a new type of need-fulfilling message. The carving of Ahmed III's two *tughra*-shaped compositions, which are the only known examples of this type used for epigraphic purposes, at the entrance to the holiest site of the Topkapı Palace, indicates an attempt by the Sultan to imprint the Hall with the Ottoman seal. Their rhyming texts, "*Cihān māliki hākān-ı emced*" (King of the world, most honourable ruler), "*şerīat sāliki Sultān Ahmed*" (Follower of the holy law, Sultan Ahmed) immortalized the titles of Ahmed III. In addition, the use of this format, mimicking the imperial Ottoman emblem, the *tughra*, united three concepts in one calligraphic composition: the Sultan, the state and the Prophet.

Another probable reason for the Sultan to place these *tughra*-shaped compositions on the exterior entrance of the sacred Hall may have been to benefit from their protective, perhaps even talismanic, properties. Ahmed III was very much aware of the need of the sultan for some element of protection against rebelling janissaries, who had previously invaded the imperial palace and dethroned many of his predecessors. To avoid such an occurrence happening to him, Ahmed III, with his calligraphic and epigraphic programme, aimed to create the image of an ideal ruler in the eyes of the '*ulemā* and janisarries. Unfortunately, his *tughra*-shaped compositions extolling his religious nature did not serve the protective function he had hoped for. The Ottoman chronicler Destārī Sālih Efendi noted that just like earlier rebellious janissaries, those following Patrona Halil defined themselves as "Muslims, who ask for absolute adherence to the holy law (*şerīat*)".[432] Praising Mahmud I's enthronement following the Patrona Halil rebellion, Destārī Sālih Efendi ends his words with the prayer: "May God make our sultan a follower of the holy law".[433] This expression is almost identicle to the text of Ahmed III's self-defining *tughra*-shaped composition; "Follower of the holy law, Sultan Ahmed."

Fig.42 The *Tughra*-shaped Composition on the Right Side of the Entrance

[432] Destārī , (1962), p.10
[433] Ibid, p.32

Fig.43 The *Tughra*-shaped Composition on the Left Side of the Entrance

Ahmed's two *tughra* compositions not only introduce an entirely new use for the format of the imperial monogram but they also form a link between epigraphy and the calligraphic album. The Sultan designed identical copies of these two carved *tughra*-shaped compositions in his *Imperial Tughra Album* (TSMK-H.2280); both are dated 1140AH/1727AD (Figs.44, 45). Although the carved versions are undated, they must have been in situ in 1138AH/1725AD, when the *façade* of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet was renovated and the Tekfur Saray tiles enframing the compositions were put in place. The precise placement of the tiled borders indicates that Ahmed's *tughra*-shaped compositions were also in place by the same date. 1138AH/1725AD is also the date seen on the *jalī thuluth tevhīd* carved above the Hall entrance. The *tughra*-shaped epigraphic compositions, therefore, must have been the forerunners of the album versions.

Fig.44 The *Tughra* Album Page (1) Dated 1727 The Entrance of the Hall (1) Dated 1725

Fig.45 The *Tughra* Album Page (2) Dated 1727 The Entrance of the Hall (2) Dated 1725

In creating his carved *tughra*-shaped compositions, the Sultan introduced another innovative feature in the placement of his pear-shaped signature within the medallions carved in the upper right quadrant of the composition. Round medallions are also evident in the illuminated *tughra*-shaped compositions in the *Imperial tughra Album*. Further linking the monumental and illuminated compositions is the fact that in addition to the medallions, the corner illuminations carved into the Topkapı compositions have also been used in the album versions.

Ahmed III's two *tughra*-shaped compositions are the earliest epigraphic examples of their type, but it became a custom of subsequent sultans to place them within the Topkapı Palace. As these were the earliest known examples of the *tughra*-shaped composition for epigraphic purposes, their placement on either side of the entrance of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, as well as the *jalī thuluth tevhīd* located above the same entrance, opened a new path. One such follower of this 'new' application was the calligrapher-sultan Mahmud II (r.1808-1834), who composed calligraphic panels for display above various gates of the Topkapı Palace.

III.2.1.b. The Chancery Hall (*Dīvān*)

In the Chancery Hall of the Topkapı Palace the same *genre* of design as that applied to the entrance wall of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet was used (Fig.47). This time, however, the *tevhīd* formulation is grouped with the two *tughra*s in the same space instead of being delineated by an arched opening, and the texts of the *tughra*s are not poetry but the official titles of the Sultan: "*Khān Ahmed b. Mehemmed al-Muzaffer Dāimā*".

Fig.46 The *Tevhīd* Panel and Two *Tughra*s of Ahmed III in the Scribe's Hall

The similarity of the designs shared by the composition in the Scribe's Hall and that at the entrance of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet creates a link between these two spaces. The similarity of Ahmed's calligraphic compositions in these two halls aims to emphasize their common nature: one hall, with the relics of the Prophet, representing the past, while the other is indicative of the present, a time when the Ottomans ruled a great majority of the Islamic world.

The *jalī thuluth tevhīd* plaque (Fig.47) in the Chancery Hall is in overlaid gold over a red background and was possibly copied from the same ink original as the *jalī thuluth tevhīd* inscription above the entrance of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet. Although both this plaque and the two *tughra*s below it were all executed on wooden surfaces, they must be considered as monumental inscriptions as they were designed to be placed precisely in their specific locations within the Scribe's Hall. The frame of baroque style leaves, surrounding the *tevhīd* plaque dates from the reign of Sultan Osman III (r.1754-57), and was likely added when the hall was re-decorated. The *Tughra* to its lower right is placed against a black ground, whereas the one to the left was applied on a yellow one. Ahmed III's son, Mustafa III, followed his father's precedent and placed a panel bearing his own *tughra* on another wall within the Scribe's Hall. Later on, the calligrapher-sultans Mahmud II and Abdülmecid created message-giving calligraphic compositions and placed them both in the Topkapı Palace and in various mosques and mausoleums around the city.

Fig.47 The *Jalī Thuluth Tawhīd* in the Chancery Hall, Topkapı Palace

III.2.1.c. Ahmed III's *Jalī thuluth* compositions carved on marble plaques

Marble plaques inscribed with Ahmed III's *jalī thuluth* compositions play an important role in the epigraphic repertoire of the Topkapı Palace. In addition to the above examples, of the Gate of Felicity (*Bābüssaāde*), facing the Chamber of Petitions (*Arz Odası*), is a *jalī thuluth hadith* plaque, reading *ra's al-hikmat makhāfat-Allāh* (the beginning of wisdom is fearing God) (Fig.48).

During the seventeenth century the Gate of Felicity and the Chamber of Petitions were attacked many times by the janissaries and, in fact, before the dethronement of Osman II, the Gate of Felicity and the walls of the Chamber of Petitions were heavily destroyed by them.[434] By locating this *hadith* on the inner side of the Gate of Felicity, Ahmed III not only wished to give advice to the elite viewers, but also wished to create a pious atmosphere within this extremely busy passage of the palace, perhaps with the intention of warding off possible future attacks.

Fig.48 The carved marble *jalī thuluth Ra's al-ḥikmat makhāfatullāh* on the inner side of the Gate of Felicity (*Bābüssaāde*) facing the third court in the Topkapı Palace

Another marble plaque bearing a *jalī thuluth basmalah* by the Sultan, signed and dated 1131 A.H. (1718 A.D.), is located above the entrance of the Chamber of

[434] Sakaoğlu, (2003), p.229

Petitions (Fig.49). This *basmala* could have been placed there following the restoration in 1724.[435] Identical inscriptions copied in overlaid gold on wooden panels are found in the Museum of Turkish Pious Endowments and Calligraphy, the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts (TIEM 2799) and the Topkapı Palace Museum. An undated copy carved on marble is also found on the right wall of the third courtyard of the Topkapı Palace (Fig.50).

Fig.49 The *Jalī Thuluth Basmala* above the Entrance of the Chamber of Petitions (*Arz Odası*), Topkapı Palace

Fig.50 Undated copy of the *jalī thuluth basmalah* by Ahmed III, carved on marble, Topkapı Palace

III.2.2. The Chronogram for the Dervish-Lodge of the Dırağman Mosque

[435] Kuban, (2007), p.420 Two *tughra*-shaped compositions were added to both sides of the entrance of the chamber of petitions on a similar occasion, following the restoration that took place under Sultan Abdülmecid, in the mid-nineteenth century. According to Godfrey Goodwin, the *basmala* commemorates a restoration by Ahmed III in 1724. [Goodwin, (1999) p.118] Also see; Penzer, (1966), p.233.

In İstanbul's Balat region, in 1729, the Mosque of Dırağman, originally built in 1542, was consumed by fire. Ahmed III ordered it to be rebuilt with an attached derviş lodge and following its completion, he composed a restoration chronogram[436] and calligraphed it in *jalī thuluth*.[437] Ahmed III's involvement with the restoration enabled him to display his artistic skills, in both calligraphy and poetry, at this site. Ahmed's chronogram was carved on a marble plaque and located above the entrance of the main hall (*tevhīdhāne*) of the Dervish Lodge (Fig.51).

Fig.51 The *Jalī Thuluth* Chronogram couplet by Ahmed III, Carved on marble, Topkapı Palace

In his *Mecmu'a-i Tevārih*, a collection of chronograms, Ayvansarayī recorded Ahmed's chronogram for the restoration of the Mosque of Dırağman. The chronogram, found in the second line of the following couplet, reads;

Bu mısra'-i tārih nutk u hattıdır Hān Ahmed'in

Sultan Ahmed tekye-i tevhīdi ihyā eyledi (1143 AH)[438]

'This line of chronogram is the word and calligraphy of Sultan Ahmed

Sultan Ahmed gave life to the dervish-lodge of unity (1730 AD)'

The Sultan revealed, in this chronogram, both his charity and his artistry. The "dervish-lodge of unity" could refer not only to the new structure but also to the capital, as İstanbul's literary name was "Asitāne", meaning "dervish-lodge". The

[436] Ahmed III, p.65
[437] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.79
[438] Ayvansarayī, (1985), p.217 According to Ali Emīrī Efendi, who transcribed the *Dīwān* of Ahmed III, the date is 1142 AH. *Dīwān*, p.65

metaphorical use of the "dervish-lodge of unity" may, therefore, also imply the Ottoman capital.[439] It has been recorded both by Ayvansarayī and Müstakimzāde that a separate *jalī thuluth* panel composed by the Sultan, bearing the phrase *fa'lamu annahu lā ilāha illa Allāh*, was given to the same mosque by Ahmed III as a royal gift.[440] This now-missing panel was probably a *zer-endūd* (gold overlaid) copy of the above-mentioned *jalī thuluth* panel in the Mausoleum of Devātī Mustafa, Üsküdar.

As a leading figure of courtly arts, both as a patron and practitioner, the Sultan marked his charitable works with his own poetry and calligraphy. The composition of long poetic texts culminating in a chronogram became the subject of an open debate among court calligraphers, yet this was not the only time the Sultan was involved in this process. Ahmed also composed chronograms for the public fountains placed in front of the Topkapı Palace and in Üsküdar.

III.2.3. Monumental Inscriptions on Public Fountains

The epigraphic inscriptions of Ahmed III on the two imperially commissioned public fountains represents a transition from his calligraphic in use within the confines of interior spaces, which is to say the palace, mosques and mausoleums, to the public, outdoor space. *Jalī* calligraphy became a characteristic part of the decoration of public fountains, placed in the heart of the reshaped urban fabric of the capital, particularly in imperial and public gardens.[441] Among the fountains commissioned in the first half of the eighteenth century, the fountains of Ahmed III and his mother mark the introduction of a new type, the public-square fountain (*meydan çeşmesi*). These are large, free standing, cubical structures with water-spouts on four sides, covered with a pyramidal roof. Designed by the court architect Kayserili Mehmed Ağa, these fountains were praised by court poets.

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[439] When Mustafa III was enthroned, he relocated this chronogram to above the entrance of the *khanqāh* of Tercüman Yunus, also attached to the Mosque of Dırağman, See Ayvansarayī, (2001), p.167

[440] Müstakimzāde (1928), p.79 – Ayvansarayī, (2001), p.167

[441] For further discussion on the 'openness' of the period, see: Donald Quataert, 'Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720-1829', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 29, No.3, pp. 403-425.

Inscriptions on the Fountain of Ahmed III

The imperial fountain of Ahmed III, built in 1728-29, outside the first gate of the Topkapı Palace, is the first example of a *meydan çeşmesi*.[442] It is evident that Ahmed III was personally interested in the construction of this fountain for in his decree (*firman*), dated *Ramadan* 1141 (July 1728), he requested that marble of the finest quality be sent by the governor of Marmara to be used in its construction.[443]

The northern façade of the fountain has a band of *jalī thuluth* placed on it; this is the chronogram, divided between two cartouches, composed and signed by Ahmed III (Fig.52). It follows a long poem by the court poet Seyyid Vehbī written in honour of water, which was selected following a competition to decide the best poem for placement on the fountain.[444] It was then penned in *nasta'līq* script by Mehmed Efendi of Bursa[445] before being inscribed on all four sides of the fountain.

The chronogram couplet carved on the northern façade of the fountain has also been recorded in the section on chronograms (*tevārih*) in the *Dīwān* of the Sultan.[446] It reads:

Tārihi Sultan Ahmed'in cārī zebān-ı lüleden

Aç besmeleyle iç suyu Hān Ahmed'e eyle duā (1141AH)

[Sultan Ahmed's chronogram is flowing from this tap

Turn it on with a *basmala* to drink water and pray for Ahmed III (1728AD)]

Fig.52 The Chronogram of the Public Fountain of Ahmed III in *Jalī Thuluth*

[442] Goodwin, (1987), p.374
[443] Altınay, (1930), p.101
[444] Aynur-Karateke, (1995), p.178
[445] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.456
[446] *Dīwān*, p.64

The pear-shaped signature of Ahmed III, *Ahmed b. Mehmed Khān* is located to the lower left part of the composition, just under the last word of the couplet, '*duā*' (pray) (Fig.53).

Fig.53 Detail from the Public Fountain of Ahmed III

The composition of Ahmed's chronogram became a subject of literary discussion among the court poets. According to the historian Mehmed Rāif Bey, Ahmed III's original version of the second line of the chronogram was "*Besmele ile i çuyu Hān Ahmed'e eyle duā*", signifying the date 1137 AH, which was four years short of the required date of 1141. The court poet Seyyid Vehbī, whose poem had been selected for display on the Sultan's fountain, is said to have added the first word of the present line, "*A* 'ç, which supplied the additional numeric value of 4, turning the chronogram verse into "*Aç besmele ile i çsuyu Hān Ahmed'e eyle duā*" and providing the precise year of construction, 1141 AH.[447]

Inscriptions on the Public Fountain of Emetullah Gülnuş Vālide Sultan

The public-square fountain in Üsküdar, commemorating Sultan Ahmed's mother Emetullah Gülnuş Vālide Sultan, was built in 1728. The famous court poets Nedīm and Şākir composed two eulogies for this fountain. In addition, the poet Rahmī composed another eulogy which was completed by Şākir. These three poems appear

[447] Mehmed Rāif, (1913), p.6

on the east, west and south facades of the fountain in elegant *nasta'līq*, calligraphed by an unknown scribe.

The chronogram couplet for this fountain was again composed by Ahmed III, but this time with the aid of his Grand Vizier, Dāmād İbrahim Paşa. However, it is the second line that provides the information that the date of the fountain's construction was composed by the Sultan himself.[448] This couplet, written in *jalī thuluth* and carved on marble, appears on the western *façade* (Fig.54). The chronogram couplet reads;

Dedi Hān Ahmed ile bile İbrahim târihin

Suvardı âlemi dest-i Muhammedle cevâdullāh (1141AH)

'İbrahim composed this chronogram together with Ahmed Khan

God's generosity watered the universe through Muhammad's hand' (1728AD)

Fig.54 The Chronogram Couplet on the Public Fountain of Ahmed III, in Üsküdar, İstanbul

The format of this *jalī thuluth* chronogram couplet in Üsküdar is similar to that of the public-square fountain in front of the Topkapı Palace. In both cases, the couplet is divided into two separate cartouches forming a band and Ahmed's signature is placed below the final word. In the Üsküdar couplet band, the pear-shaped signature of 'Khān Ahmed b. Mehmed' is located under the last word, '*Allah'* (Fig.55).

[448] Ahmed III, p.63 (The date recorded in the *Dīwān* is not 1141 but 1139.)

Fig.55 Detail of the signature of Sultan Ahmed III from the Public Fountain in Üsküdar

III.3. Calligraphic Works Applied on Tiles

III.3.1. The Hadith-tughra Tiles

Under Sultan Ahmed III, with the support of Dāmād İbrahim Paşa, a tile workshop was established in the Tekfur Saray, in İstanbul, to revive tile production. Craftsmen from Iznik came to İstanbul in 1719 and ateliers were established in Tekfur Saray which were active for ten years, between 1725 and 1735.[449] Trial production of ceramics at this site probably started around 1720 and although tiles produced at these kilns never reached the quality of Iznik wares, they feature innovative motifs and inscriptions, which marked a turning point in the history of Ottoman ceramics. An example of such a Tekfur Saray tile exhibiting calligraphy can be seen in Figure 56.

Fig.56 Tekfur Saray Tile Bearing Calligraphy in *Thuluth* Script

Among the tiles created at the Tekfur Saray is a small group bearing calligraphic compositions designed by Sultan Ahmed III. The first and most striking of those is a *tughra*-shaped composition (hereafter *hadith-tughra*) of the Sultan which bears the *hadith*: 'On the day of judgment) my companionship will be with the great sinners of my community' (*Shafāatī li ahl-i'l Qabāiri min ummatī*) (Fig.57).

[449] Uzunçarşılı, (1956), p.157

Fig.57 The *Hadith-tughra*

This *hadith-tughra* was composed by Ahmed III in 1710 (TSM A.812). This innovative composition is the earliest application of the Ottoman *tughra* in use as a calligraphic format for a religious text. It was signed by the Sultan in a couplet, divided into two lines, located in the bottom half of the composition to the far left and right. This outstanding composition appears to be the only example of the *tughra*-shaped which was applied on tiles.

There are three other instances of the application of this *hadith-tughra* on Tekfur Saray tiles. Chronologically, the first of these is the *hadith-tughra* composed on six polychrome tiles in the Topkapı Palace Harem Mosque. The Harem Mosque is located on the Gold Path (*Altın yol*) in the Harem, across the Princes' Mansions (*Şehzādeler Kasrı*).[450] The Mosque was built within the Imperial Harem complex of the Topkapı Palace in 1725. It was located just behind the Kara Ağalar Mosque (mosque of the black eunuchs), where young princes used to study the recitation of the *Qur'an*.[451] The Harem Mosque houses some fine examples of polychrome tiles produced in the Tekfur Saray workshops in İstanbul. Amongst these tiles is a group of calligraphic compositions attributable to Ahmed III, some of them copied from his early works. One is the aforementioned *hadith-tughra*, arranged on six tiles (Fig.58). In addition to the hadith painted on it (*Shafāatī li ahl-i'l Qabāiri min ummatī*), the *hadith-tughra* in the Harem Mosque has an additional inscription reading "Māshāllāh" (As God desired) above it. The original of this composition (TSMK-A.831), signed by Ahmed III, is in the Topkapı Palace Library.

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[450] The Harem Mosque was converted into a mosque during the reign of Ahmed III and decorated with Tekfur Saray tiles. It was opened certainly in or after 1726. Further research is needed on this matter. I would like to thank Professor Filiz Yenişehirlioğlu who drew my attention to these tiles.
[451] Koçu, (1972), p.158

Fig. 58 The *hadith-tughra* of Ahmed III in the mosque of the Harem in the Topkapı Palace

Unlike other Tekfur Saray tiles bearing the *hadith-tughra*, this application has a unique feature, the use of underglaze paint in blue and red. The letters *'ayn*, *ta* and *ya* in the word *shafā'atī* , have been outlined in red. The word *'ati* in red, the last letters of the word *shafā'atī ,* translates as "disobedient slave" in Arabic.[452] By the use of multiple colours, a single word (*'shafā'atī')* could be visually split into two. It was possibly ordered by the Sultan, who used this as a self-referential phrase and 'placed' himself in the centre of the *hadith* text as the disobedient (*'atī*) one. By doing so, he humbly declared his sinful nature while, at the same time, asking for intercession (*shafā'at*) from the Prophet.

This employment of multi-colour letters could have been inspired from a similar application in the tomb of Sultan Selīm I (r.1512-1520), located in the *qibla* direction of the graveyard of the Yavuz Sultan Selīm complex, in Fātih, İstanbul. Above the tiled panels decorating both sides of the entrance of the tomb of Selīm I, is a white *jalī thulth* dedicatory inscription in which the name "Sultan Süleymān *Hān*" is high-lighted in yellow (Fig. 59).[453]

[453] The tile panels of the tomb of Selīm I have been published in Arli&Altun, (2008), p.149.
[453] The tile panels of the tomb of Selīm I have been published in Arli&Altun, (2008), p.149.

Fig.59 The Tiled Panel Decorating both Sides of the Entrance of the Tomb of Selīm I

The next application of Ahmed III's *hadith-tughra* on Tekfur Saray ware is on a single tile (NM C.499) created for the Mosque of Dāmād İbrahim Paşa built in his hometown, the city of Nevşehir, in central Anatolia (Fig.60).[454] Although undated, it was possibly produced, in 1727, during the construction of the mosque.

Fig.60 The Tekfur Saray Tile Bearing the *Hadith-tughra* of Ahmed III

The third application is found on a single polychrome tile today in the Nevşehir Museum (Fig.61). This tile was brought to the museum from the Nar Köyü Mosque, built in 1728 by Dāmād İbrahim Paşa's chamberlain, Osman Ağa.[455] It was possibly produced in the same year. It is striking that both this tile and the previous example bearing the *hadith-tughra* of Ahmed III appear to have been produced on the order of Dāmād İbrahim Paşa and sent to his home city of Nevşehir.

[454] The museum accounts record that the tile was brought to the Nevşehir Museum from the Mosque of Damad Ibrahim Paşa.
[455] Naza-Dönmez, (1996), p.109

Fig.61: Tekfur Saray tile bearing the *tughra*-shaped *hadith* composition by Ahmed III, Nevşehir Museum.

The application of the *hadith-tughra* on Tekfur Saray tiles appears to have been part of an on-going process. By 1725, *tughra*-shaped compositions designed by Ahmed III were applied on larger scale for decorative and epigraphic purposes, as already seen in the calligraphic compositions flanking the entrance to the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet in the Topkapı Palace.

Another *tughra*-shaped composition is found in the Harem Mosque, carved on a marble plaque, and exhibits a couplet that reads: *Al-Ḥaqqu wa lā suwāh / Shāh Ahmed al-Muẓ affar Dāimā* (There is nothing but God / Shāh Ahmed always victorious) (Fig.62).[456] The text of this *tughra*-shaped composition originates from a well-known *sufi* phrase, *Allāhu wa lā suwāhu* (There is nothing but God). In Ahmed's calligraphic composition, the word *Allāh* (God) has been exchanged with the word *Al-Ḥaqq* in order to maintain a better balance in the lower section of the *tughra*.

Fig.62 The *tughra*-shaped Composition in the Harem Mosque

[456] The word *Ḥaqq* means truth or reality. *Al-Haqq* however is one of the ninety nine names of God.

The marble *tughra* plaque is very similar to the two *tughra*s on the entrance of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet. Although this one is unsigned its composition can be attributed to Ahmed III. This hypothesis is supported by another unsigned work in the Harem Mosque, the *jalī thuluth*, *fatabārak allāhu (aḥsan al-khāliqīn)* composition.[457]

III.3.2. The Jalī Thuluth 'Fatabārak Allāhu Aḥsan al-Khāliqīn' Tiles

Ahmed III's second calligraphic composition applied on Tekfur Saray tiles is also found in the Harem Mosque ofthe Topkapı Palace (Fig.63). This composition, consisting of six square tiles, is an unmistakable imitation of the *fatabārak allāhu (aḥsan al-khāliqīn)* signed panel (TSM- 06-31655), in *jalī thuluth* script.

Fig.63. Tekfur Sarayı Tiles bearing the *Jalī Thuluth* Composition of Ahmed III

The text is a *Quranic* verse: 'Glory be to God, who is the most beneficent of creators'.[458] Both in the original panel and in its recreation on tiles, the second half of the verse, '*aḥsan al-khāliqīn*' has been located in the upper left corner of the composition. Ahmed III's calligraphic works on tiles went hand in hand with his works carved on marble plaques, both of which were inspired by his early works in albums and panels. A group the Sultan's calligraphic works must have been selected to be copied on marble plaques and ceramic tiles.

III.3.3. The Jalī Thuluth Righteous Caliphs Tiles

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[457] فتبارك الله (احسن الخالقين)
[458] The *Qur'an,* Sūrat al-Mu'minūn: 23/14

In addition to the *hadith-tughra* and the *jalī thuluth Quranic* verse, there is another *jalī thuluth* composition applied on Tekfur Saray tiles. The composition consists of the names of God, the Prophet and the four righteous caliphs: "Allāh, Muḥ ammad, Abū Bakr, 'Uthmān, 'Umār, 'Alī"; hereafter this composition will be called the righteous caliphs composition. It is unsigned, and although no signed original could be found, based on its calligraphic features its composition can stylistically be attributed to Ahmed III.

The earliest extant application of this composition is on the northern wall of the *Ocaklı Sofa* (Fire-place Hall), in the Imperial Harem of the Topkapı Palace (Fig.64). This is a mirrored application of the righteous caliphs composition on 24 tiles, framed by a border.

Fig.64 The *Jalī Thuluth* Inscription in the Ocaklı Sofa, Topkapı Palace

Although the majority of the polychrome tiles in the *Ocaklı Sofa* were produced in the seventeenth century, the tiles with the Righteous Caliphs inscription appear to have been produced in the early eighteenth century in the Tekfur Saray kilns.[459] Also in place in this chamber is a *jalī thuluth* inscription running along the other three walls bearing a text in Arabic in the name of Ahmed III's father, Mehmed IV.[460] The two righteous caliphs compositions flanking the fireplace, however, appear to be composed as a separate entity, not as an adjunct of the main calligraphic band on the other walls. I believe that the righteous caliphs composition was designed by Ahmed

[459] There is no scientific literature on the tiles of the Harem complex and the Ocaklı Sofa (Fire-place Hall). I consulted Professor Filiz Yenişehirlioğlu, who has been working on the tiles of the Harem complex in the Topkapı Palace. According to Prof. Yenişehirlioğlu, tiles in the Ocaklı Sofa were restored and replaced continuously from the seventeenth century onward. She agrees that the tiles with the righteous caliphs inscription could be attributed to the early eighteenth century.
[460] Çığ, (1988), p.41

III and applied as a memento just next to the band praising his father. The placement and the quality of the *Ocaklı Sofa* tiles, the location, and the calligraphic features of the composition match no other calligrapher's style but Ahmed III's.

An innovative feature of the righteous caliphs composition is the multi-functional use of some letters. The letter *kaf*, of Abū Bakr, for instance, has been combined with the letter *ha* of Muḥ ammad. A similar unauthorized combination is observed in the use of the letter *'ayn* only once but still as the first letter of three names: *'*Umār, *'*Uthmān and *'*Alī. This same letter, *'ayn,* has further been united with *dal*, the last letter of Muḥ ammad. A last example of this method in this composition is the first letter of Muḥ ammad, *mīm*, has been united with *ha*, the last letter of *Allāh*. Fine examples of such unauthorized letter combinations are again found in Timurid and early Safavid calligraphic albums that were placed in the Topkapı Palace Library, which as has been shown must have inspired Ahmed III in many instances.[461] These unauthorized combinations support the attribution of this composition to Ahmed III, whose virtuosity as a calligrapher is manifestly evident in his signed works. Another reason for the attribution of the righteous caliphs panel to him is that the symmetrically composed, mirrored arrangement of this panel resembles the mirrored *jalī thuluth basmala* panel (TIEM 2724) of the Sultan, in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, İstanbul (cat. No. 11).

Between 1725 and 1730, six single Tekfur Saray tiles bearing the righteous caliphs composition identical to the legible right half of the Ocaklı Sofa tiles produced under Ahmed III were created. No other calligraphic composition was as frequently applied on Tekfur Saray tiles. A calligraphic composition which received so much attention and was privately commissioned on tiles so many times could not have belonged to an ordinary calligrapher. There is further evidence to support this statement.

Two of these six Tekfur Saray tiles exhibiting the righteous caliphs composition are in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The first one (V&A 1756-1892) is dated 1727 and was possibly produced for the Dāmād İbrahim Paşa Mosque in Nevşehir, constructed in the same year (Fig.65).

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[461] Ottoman calligraphers borrowed many techniques from Timurid calligraphy, such as the *kāt'ı* (cut out) technique, which was popular in eighteenth-century Istanbul. [Çağman-Aksoy, (1998), p.58]

Fig.65 The 'Tekfur Saray' tile, bearing the righteous caliphs composition attributable to Ahmed III, dated 1139 A.H. (1727 A.D.), [V&A, Inv. No. 1756-1892]

The second V&A tile, which is almost identical, is undated (Fig.66).[462]

Fig.66 The 'Tekfur Saray' tile, bearing the righteous caliphs composition attributable to Ahmed III (V&A: 420-1900)

The inclusion of a border to frame the inscription on both these tiles implies that the frame feature employed by Ahmed on his calligraphic panels was applied and adopted for single tiles bearing calligraphic compositions.

The next two Tekfur Saray tiles bearing the Righteous Caliphs composition are located in the Dāmād İbrahim Paşa Mosque in Nevşehir. These two tiles, dated 1727, the same year as the construction of the mosque, are located on either side of the *mihrab* (Fig.67).

[462] I would like to thank Dr. Mariam Rosser-Owen at the V&A Museum for drawing my attention to this tile.

Fig.67 The *Mihrab* of the Damad İbrahim Paşa Mosque in Nevşehir

They are almost identical, except that the tile to the left of the *mihrab* bears miniature depictions of the Holy *Ka'ba* and the Tomb of the Prophet (Fig.68) while that place to the right does not (Fig.69).

Fig.68 The Tekfur Saray Tile Located to the left side of *Mihrab* of the Nevşehirli Dāmād İbrahim Paşa Mosque in Nevşehir

Fig.69 The Tekfur Saray Tile Located to the right side of the *Mihrab* of the Nevşehirli Dāmād İbrahim Paşa Mosque in Nevşehir

A connection is created between these two tales in situ within the Dāmād İbrahim Paşa Mosque and the V&A tile dated 1727 in that all three are dated 1727. It then seems plausible that the dated V&A tile could well have been produced for the same mosque.

There are only three tile compositions placed within the Dāmād İbrahim Paşa Mosque: the two righteous caliph tiles and the above-mentioned tile bearing the *hadith-tughra* of Ahmed III. As it is certain that the original composition of the *hadith-tughra* tile was created by Ahmed III, the righteous caliphs composition on the other two tiles could well be attributed to the Sultan. In fact, the significance of the righteous caliphs composition in this space has been magnified by an additional application of it on the upper left-hand side of the western wall of the mosque (Fig.70).

Fig.70 The Righteous Caliphs Composition Located to the Western Wall of the Mosque

The emphasis on this particular composition could be linked to its textual content, displaying the names of God, the Prophet and the four righteous caliphs. Traditionally, in Ottoman mosques the names *Allah* and Muhammad appear in *jalī thuluth* script on either side of the *mihrab* and the names of the four righteous caliphs are placed in the transitional zones. The present composition of Ahmed III, therefore, can be viewed as a compact formula of these six names designed primarily for placement within mosques.

It was possibly the Grand-vizier, Dāmād İbrahim Paşa, who was the one to actually found the Tekfur Saray workshops, who commissioned the above-discussed tiles bearing the calligraphic compositions of Ahmed III. The single tiles bearing the *hadith-tughra* and the righteous caliphs composition in his mosque in Nevşehir, support this statement. İbrahim Paşa possibly wished to adorn his mosque with these tiles, which he has regarded as souvenirs from the monarch whom he served as a loyal companion.

The fifth righteous caliphs tile, dated 1729, is today in the Nevşehir Museum (Fig.71).

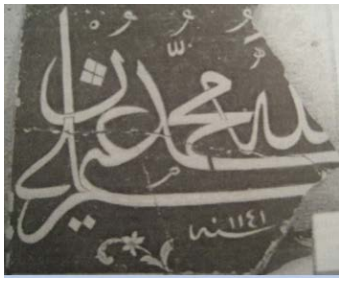

Fig.71 The Tekfur Saray Tile in the Nevşehir Museum, Dated 1141 A.H. (1728 A.D.)

The museum accounts state that it was also originally found in the Dāmād İbrahim Paşa Mosque. The fact that is particular one was produced two years after the tiles created in 1727 is indicative of the fact that there was an ongoing interest in this composition and its application on Tekfur Saray tiles. This is further evident with the sixth and last tile of this series, is dated 1730 (Fig. 72).[463]

Fig.72 The Tekfursaray Tile in the Nevşehir Museum, Dated 1143 A.H. (1730 A.D.)

In a private collection in İstanbul, this appears to be the last tile produced in the Tekfur Saray workshops that bears the righteous caliphs composition. In 1730 Ahmed III was dethroned and Dāmād İbrahim Paşa assassinated. Although the Tekfur Saray workshops were active until 1735, no other tiles produced there designed with calligraphic inscriptions dated after 1730 have been found during my research. This fact supports my belief that the Tekfur Saray tiles bearing calligraphy were commissioned only by the Sultan and his Grand-Vizier.

That none of the righteous caliphs tiles bear the signature of Ahmed III may have been because his signature appears to have never been reproduced on tiles. This seems to have been a conscious choice as even the calligraphic compositions recreated on Tekfur Saray tiles that were copied from his signed works did not reproduce his signature.

Consequently, we know that a small group of tiles bearing calligraphic compositions of Sultan Ahmed III were produced in the Tekfur Saray workshops between 1725 and 1730. The *hadith-tughra* of Ahmed III was first applied on tiles in 1725 and located in the Topkapı Palace Harem Mosque. The Second is the *hadith-tughra* tile, dated 1727, produced for the Dāmād İbrahim Paşa Mosque in Nevşehir. And the

[463] I would like to thank Professor Baha Tanman for drawing my attention to this tile.

third *hadith-tughra* tile, dated 1728, was produced for the Nar K öyü Mosque i Nevşehir.

CHAPTER FOUR

Sultan Ahmed III's *Qur'an* Manuscripts and Calligraphic Albums

هیچ خطاطی نویسد خط بفن

بهر عین خط بهر خواندن

مولانا جلال الدین بلخی

مثنوی المعنوی بیت ١٥٢٧٤

"Could ever a calligrapher compose calligraphy just for art?

No way… Calligraphy is always composed for being read."

Mawlāna Jalāl al-Dī n Rūmī

Mathnawī al-Ma'nawī (Couplet 15274)

Chapter IV. Sultan Ahmed III's *Qur'an* Manuscripts and Calligraphic Albums

In addition to producing calligraphic arrangements in the innovative panel format, Ahmed III composed calligraphy in the more traditional formats of albums and manuscripts. Unlike his calligraphic panels and monumental inscriptions, these smaller, handheld compositions by the Sultan were only visible to a group of privileged elite. They were not available to the public and therefore their content did not have the same visual presence as that of the calligraphic panels. Religious concerns and the utmost pious nature of transcribing the *Qur'an* must have been the impetus for the Sultan's creation of the four *Qur'an* manuscripts he transcribed. In compiling calligraphic albums, however, the Sultan obviously wished to reassure his mastery of certain scripts in the eyes of the master calligraphers who attended his calligraphy salon.

IV.1. Qur'an Manuscripts

The act of transcribing the holy *Qur'an* has always been regarded as a pious deed and in turn a small group of Muslim monarchs have been celebrated for copying the holy text. The Timurid Princes Baysunghur and Sultan İbrahim Mirza, the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir and his brother Prince Dārā Shikoh, and the Qajar ruler Fath Ali Shāh are among calligrapher-rulers who transcribed the *Qur'an*.[464] In some cases the individual who actually transcribed the holy text was not the ruler himself but a close member of the ruling household, such as Princess Umm Salamah, the daughter of Fath Ali Shah.[465] The first member of the Ottoman household who copied the *Qur'an* was Prince Korkud (d.1513), one of the eight sons of Sultan Bāyazid II.[466] However, as Prince Korkud was not enthroned, Ahmed III is the first and only Ottoman sultan who undertook the pious act of copying the *Qur'an*.

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[464] Schimmel, (1984), p.25

[465] An elegant volume consisting of Shiite prayers copied by Umm Salamah is in the Khalili Collection. See Rogers, 2007, p.189.

[466] Rado, (1980), p.56

According to Müstakimzāde, Ahmed III copied four *Qur'an* manuscripts in *naskh* script, which are not known to us today.[467] Ali Emīrī Efendi, on the other hand, in his poem praising the Sultan, states that he copied five *Qur'an* manuscripts.[468] The Sultan presented one of these as a gift to Nūreddīn Efendi, the sheikh of the Koca Mustafa Paşa Dervish-lodge in İstanbul. The second *Qur'an* was also given as a present, this time to Veliyüddīn Efendi, the *imām* of the Hāfız Paşa Mosque.[469] The final two *Qur'an* manuscripts copied by the Sultan were sent to the Tomb of the Prophet in Medina.[470] Professor Uğur Derman, who visited the collections of the *Qur'an* Manuscripts Office (*Maktabat al-Masāhif*) in Medina in May 2009, noted that both the *Qur'an* manuscripts by Ahmed III are now missing.[471]

IV.2. Calligraphic Albums

Albums consisting mostly of pieces of calligraphy and miniature paintings are among the most interesting and outstanding phenomena in Islamic art: the *muraqqa'*.[472] In Arabic, the word *muraqqa'* (album) means to 'patch', thus a *muraqqa'* is generally a collection of fragments, or a 'patchwork.' Before it was applied to albums, the word *muraqqa'* referred to a heavily patched cloth or to a cloth worn by dervishes or *sūfi*s.[473] In the Turco-Persian world the making of albums to preserve and order paintings and calligraphic specimens flourished in the late fifteenth century in Timurid Herat.[474] The tradition of album making was continued by the successors of the Timurids, the Safavids in Iran, the Mughals in India and the Ottomans in Turkey. The artists of these successor courts produced splendid albums with highly illuminated borders and sumptuous bindings.

The making of Ottoman albums began in the late fifteenth century with additions to Timurid-Turkman albums, and most sixteenth century albums were Persainate in

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[467] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.77
[468] *Dīwān*, Millet Manuscript Library, Ali Emīrī Section, Manzum, No 529, fol. 49a
[469] Derman, (1988), p.71
[470] Ibid, p. 78. Also see, Rado, 1980, p. 134
[471] Derman, (2009), p.18
[472] Safwat, (1996), 70.
[473] Roxburgh, (2005), p.8
[474] Thackston, (2001), p.7

content and overall character.[475] The Ottoman sultans favoured calligraphy rather than painting and for this reason a majority of courtly Ottoman albums included only calligraphy.[476] The earliest calligraphic album of which anything is known is the *Album of Seven Masters* (TSM, H.2310), a collection of the works by seven master calligraphers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries assembled for the bibliophile Prince Baysunghur.[477]

A distinction must be made between gathered albums and compiled albums. In general, the majority of albums produced can be considered gathered albums, which include works of different origin that have been collected and bound together. These are typically small collections or gatherings of calligraphy and/or miniature paintings, indicating the taste and status of their owner. In some cases, the page layouts and collected gathering of folios are configured in an ordered manner, and in others there is no order at all.[478]

Albums consisting of collected specimens, such as the *Album of Seven Masters* (TSM H.2310), the *Kevorkian Album* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Millennial Album of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah in the Chester Beatty Library contain texts in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and sometimes Dakhni Urdu.[479] However there is a different type of album that is not gathered but compiled. These albums include selected texts, in a certain order, and display contextual unity.

The Timurids' album production was related to their desire for reference models or, in other words, selected archetypes: "Works on paper were not only useful examples from which to study, and critical to the imitative procedures that undergirded creativity in art, but also came to be regarded as part of the historical record of

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[475] Fetvacı (2011), p.244

[476] A late seventeenth century Mughal calligraphic album in the Khalili Collection, London, bears a note to the effect that the album is to calligraphy what the albums of Jahangir were to painting. For further discussion see; Rogers, 2007, p.190.

[477] Thackston, (2001), p.7

[478] Ibid, p.9

[479] The transition of styles in both miniature painting and calligraphy through imperial albums is a vital aspect of the arts of the book that were amalgamated into a single album. This has been discussed by Annemarie Schimmel in her article "The Calligraphy and Poetry of the Kevorkian Album" and Marie L. Swietochowski in her article "Decorative Borders in Mughal Albums". [See; *The Emperor's Album*, (1987), pp.31-45 and p.45-79]. David James in his article on the Millennial Album has argued calligraphic specimen in Dakhni Urdu. [See; David James. "The Millennial Album of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shāh", *Islamic Art II*, 1987, pp.243-254.]

achievement."[480] The Ottomans were quick to adopt the Timurid model; a group of bibliophile Ottoman sultans, including Mehmed II, Bāyazıd II, Selīm I and Murād III, have been associated with album production.[481] Following the example set by the Timurids, commissioning albums became part of the princely image in the eyes of the Ottoman ruling class and members of other Muslim dynasties. The Ottoman elite read historians praising the intelligence of Timurid sultans, such as 'Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī's eulogies on Baysunghur, which reinforced their perception that the commissioning of albums was a princely virtue.[482]

However, the association of a ruler with the making of a calligraphic album is rare. In the history of Mughal calligraphy, for instance, only the Emperor Shāh Jahān's eldest son, Dārā Shikoh, is known to have compiled an album of calligraphic specimens and individual examples.[483] In the history of Ottoman calligraphy Ahmed III is the only sultan to have compiled individual calligraphic albums of his own work. However, it is known that a group of Ottoman calligrapher-sultans, Sultan Ahmed I in particular, personally patronized album production.

Although he never compiled individual albums, Sultan Ahmed I composed album pages, almost a century before Ahmed III.[484] Ahmed I wrote single album pages of *hadith*s and placed them into contemporary and early calligraphic albums that included various pieces of Persian calligraphy and miniature painting. The *Bağdad 408 Album*, produced on Ahmed I's order, includes a lavishly illuminated opening page (Fig.73) bearing *hadith*s of the Prophet which is transcribed by Ahmed I (TSMK, B.408, 5b) who also signed it. A later marginal note of *hadith*s in *naskh* script written and signed by Ahmed I is found in the fifteenth century *Ya'qūb Beg Album* (TSM H.2160, 4a), produced in the Aqqoyunlu court atelier for Uzun Hasan's brother, Yā'qūb Beg (r.1478-1490).[485]

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[480] Roxburgh, (2005), p.29
[481] Raby, (1981), pp.42-48.
[482] Roxburgh, (2005), p.39
[483] Blair, (2004), p.550
[484] Artan, (2006), p.420 Ahmed I's interest in albums was subject to scholarly debate. According to Zeren Tanındı, for instance, in some remarkable albums (TSMK H.2153, TSMK H.2160) later attributions were written by Ahmed I himself who apparently looked at the albums from time to time. [Tanındı, (1981), pp.38-9]
[485] I would like to thank Dr. Lale Uluç who drew my attention to this album.

It was Ahmed III, however, who for the first time was personally involved in the production of two complete calligraphic albums. He was possibly inspired by calligraphic albums including folios written by previous sultans, such as the *Bağdad 408 Album*.

Fig.73 *Hadith*s in *naskh* by Sultan Ahmed I (TSM B.408, 5b)

Due to political and economical decline, among the sultans of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there was a constant desire to imitate the Ottoman golden age of the sixteenth century.[486] In this respect**,** Ahmed III's fondness for his great-grand father, Ahmed I, and their common interests in calligraphy, poetry and theology take on new meaning. It almost appears as if Ahmed III desired to model himself on Ahmed I. Remember, for instance, that while laying the foundation stone of his library in the Topkapı Palace Ahmed III used the same golden axe which had been used by Ahmed I to lay the foundation stone of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.[487] It is also possible that Ahmed III desired to be regarded as at least as pious as Ahmed I.[488] His genuine interest in restoring and decorating the Hall of the Mantle of the

[486] Faroqhi, (2005), pp.135-145
[487] Sakaoğlu, (2003), p.204
[488] Ahmed I's piety is well-known and his interest in holy relics has been documented briefly. It has been noted that in the Davud Paşa gardens of Istanbul, he commissioned a to-scale model of the Holy Kaba in Mecca. In addition, he used to place a small panel bearing a depiction of the Prophet Muhammad's footprint on the front his turban. It was also during his reign that the Kaba cover (*Burqa*) began to be sent from Istanbul annually. [For further information see; Sakaoğlu, (2003), p.204-207]

Prophet in the Topkapı Palace is also similar to that of Ahmed I. More pertinent to this thesis is the possibility that Ahmed I's interest in calligraphic albums could have inspired Ahmed III.[489]

Ahmed III's interest in calligraphic albums could well be considered as inspired partly by his own interest in his predecessors', particularly Ahmed I's, personal input in the production of early albums. Secondly, it is an accepted fact that as the number of Ottoman conquests gradually decreased, calligraphic albums with religious content began to replace illuminated manuscripts.[490] Following the sharp decline in the production of the Ottoman 'book of kings' (*şehnāme*) throughout the seventeenth century, the production of calligraphic albums replaced illustrated dynastic histories and similar representatives of the Ottoman historical tradition.[491]

Under Ahmed III, the production of calligraphic albums went hand-in-hand with the restoration of early calligraphic albums. Many worn-out fifteenth and sixteenth century calligraphic albums, including individually preserved specimens, were re-bound and occasionally illuminated.[492] This statement is supported by eighteenth century marble-paper margins and bindings applied to sixteenth and seventeenth century albums in the Topkapı Palace.

The richness of the Timurid, Aqqoyunlu and Safavid calligraphic albums in the Palace library must also have inspired Ahmed III, who regularly examined these works. The Sultan admired the extraordinary collection of albums, which included: the Shāh Tahmasp Album (IUK, F.1422), Bahram Mirza Album (TSM, H.2154), Baysunghur Album (TSM, H.2152), Khwāja 'Abdullah Marwarid Album (TSM, H.2156), Amīr Ghayb Beg Album (TSM, H.2161), Muḥammad Muhsīn Album

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[489] Ahmed I was not a celebrated calligrapher. However, uniting his piety with performing and patronizing the art of calligraphy, he became a model in the eyes of his successors, and, relatedly, calligraphy became part of the portrait of an ideal sultan. To an expert eye, his *naskh* is avarage or just below in terms of artistic finesse and calligraphic proportion. There is a *naskh* album page signed by him in the *Topkapı* Palace Library, Baghdad Section, No. 408.

[490] "In the seventeenth century, the number of artists and artisans producing illustrated manuscripts for the palace dropped dramatically. In 1605 there had been 93 miniature-painters recorded in the *ehl-i hiref* registers; the next year the number dropped to 57 and then to 55. In 1624 only 48 men were left, and the name of their chief was not even recorded. Until 1670 the number varied between 40 and 60, and dropped to less than 10 after this date." (Artan, [2006], p. 426).

[491] Woodhead, (1983), p. 157

[492] Derman, (2002), p. 46

(TSM,H.2157), and Walī-Muḥammad *Hān* Album (TSM, H.2137).[493] Among these, the Baysunghur Album bears the personal seal of Ahmed III.[494] As it is known that Ahmed III studied these albums, a majority of them can be understood to have served as sources of inspiration for subsequent production of his calligraphy. His observation of them helped to enrich the production of his works, in particular those created for the panel format, as he absorbed calligraphic techniques and tricks he observed in Timurid and Safavid albums.

IV.2.1. The Muhaqqaq - Thuluth Album

The *Muhaqqaq-Thuluth* Album (TSM A.3652) is one of the two calligraphic albums of Ahmed III.[495] Dated 1136/1723 and signed by Ahmed III, the album consists of ten pages.[496] Its dimensions are 46 x 28 cm. As stated in the colophon, it is a copy of an earlier album by Şeyh Hamdullah and has been copied identically by the filling in of previously outlined letters with black ink.[497] The lacquer binding is signed by Ali Üsküdārī, and dated 1139/1726.[498]

The album, consisting of ten pages, has been written in soot ink; the text opens with a *jalī muhaqqaq basmala* while the rest has been calligraphed in *thuluth* script. The inspiration for Ahmed III choosing the *muhaqqaq* script for the opening *basmala* could be due to the practice of his Master, Hāfız Osman, who frequently employed *muhaqqaq* for his *hilye*-panels. Moreover, Ahmed's elder brother, Mustafa II, composed a *jalī muhaqqaq basmala* panel, today located to the upper right side of the mihrab in the Ayasofya Mosque. The style of *muhaqqaq*, which went out of fashion in the second half of the sixteenth century, was somehow revived in this

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[493] Thackston, (2001), pp.1-24, 35-40.
[494] Çağman, (1981), p.32
[495] This album has not been subject to scholarly attention, and has only been partially published. Prof. Uğur Derman published two pages of this album in *The Masterpieces of Turkish Calligraphy* in 1981 and Gülnur Duran published a further eight pages, analysing the illumination of the period in her book, *Ali Üsküdārī*, in 2008.
[496] Duran, (2008), p.156 For Ali Üsküdārī's works also see; Bodur, (1985), pp.1-8; Çığ, (1969), pp.243-252; Ünver, (1954).
[497] Master calligraphers of the period copied calligraphic works of old masters by the use of this technique. Şekerzāde Mehmed Efendi, an important figure of Ahmed III's calligraphic salon, was criticized by Müstakimzāde, for wasting his time with such copies. See; Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.420
[498] Duran, (2008), p.156

period. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, this album was illuminated and bound by Ali Üsküdārī, the chief illuminator and lacquer-master of the court atelier.[499]

By copying an early album by Şeyh Hamdullah, Ahmed III disclosed his will to imitate a great master, perhaps the greatest master of Ottoman calligraphy. The ability to imitate Şeyh Hamdullah's hand has been a matter of honour and distinction among Ottoman calligraphers since his passing.[500] Colophons of many master calligraphers' works, including Hāfız Osman, sometimes read; *nuqila 'an khatt Ḥamdullah al-Sheikh raḥimahu Allāh* (copied after the hand of Şeyh Hamdullah, may God have mercy on him).[501]

Şeyh Hamdullah's works were copied by many in order to prove their own mastery of the different scripts. In an anecdote in Müstakimzāde's *Tuhfe-i Hattātīn,* it is stated that Hāfız Osman's imitation of the Şeyh's hand was the best. According to Müstakimzāde, "once, the colophon of Hāfız Osman's copy of an early album by Şeyh Hamdullah, in the Library of the Ayasofya Mosque, was removed, and then mistakenly re-catalogued as Şeyh Hamdullah's".[502] In this case, Ahmed III's desire to copy Şeyh Hamdullah could be linked back to the practice by his own calligraphy master, Hāfız Osman.

In his *Muhaqqaq-Thuluth* album, Ahmed III was inspired by an album (TSM H.3655) in the Topkapı Palace that was copied by Hāfız Osman from an earlier album by Şeyh Hamdullah. Ahmed III obviously selected this album on purpose to become part of this important chain of master calligraphers. Ahmed III was very interested in Şeyh Hamdullah's works and his library housed many specimens by Şeyh Hamdullah, including manuscripts copied for Sultan Mehmed II.[503]

However, in addition to the sultan's aesthetic aims there was also a spiritual aspect to the tradition of copying Şeyh Hamdullah's works. According to a common belief among Ottoman calligraphers, one who tried to copy or adapt calligraphy from the

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[499] Duran, (2008), p.17. Duran has partly published the album in her book *Ali Üsküdārī*.
[500] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.187
[501] Blair, (2006), p.483
[502] Müstakim-zade, (1928), p.304
[503] These manuscripts copied by Sheikh Hamdullah include works on science and medicine such as *Kitābi Ḥunāyn b. Isḥaq fi al-Masāil wa Ajwibatihā fi al-Ṭib*. [Serin, (2003), p.95]

works of Şeyh Hamdullah would obtain divine aid and advance smoothly.[504] This concept reveals a highly important aspect of the album by copying Şeyh Hamdullah's calligraphy, Ahmed III disclosed his wish to receive divine grace and advance in calligraphy.

The text of the *muhaqqaq-thuluth* album consists of *hadith*s of the Prophet and a saying of his son-in-law, 'Ali. This selection is understandable in light of Ahmed III's well-known interest in the science of *hadith*. As has already been seen, *hadith*s played an important role in the textual repertoire of the Sultan's calligraphic panels. Many books on *hadith* were compiled during his reign, many of which were dedicated to Ahmed III.[505] As has already been noted above, the sultan dedicated a corner of his library in the Topkapı Palace particularly for the education of *hadith*.[506] His close relationship with the leading *hadith* scholars of the period have been subject to scholarly debate. When the *hadith* scholar Ismail al-Aclūnī (d.1748), the author of *Kashf al-Khafā*, came to İstanbul in 1707, he visited Ahmed III and was appointed chief-tutor to the Great Mosque of Damascus by the sultan, where he lectured for forty years.[507] Another outstanding authority on *hadith* was Yūsuf Efendizāde Abdullah Efendi (d.1754) who dedicated his commentary on Buhārī to Ahmed III.[508]

The Content of the *Muhaqqaq-Thuluth* Album:

Fig.74 The *Muhaqqaq-Thuluth* Album, Page One (TSM A.3652)

[504] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.187
[505] Among these works, *Ahsan al-Haber* written by Abdullah b. Mehmed was presented to Ahmed III following his enthronement in 1703. Other works on *hadith,* such as the translation of forty *hadiths* by Hikmetī and Osmanzāde Tāib Efendi's *Ṣıhhat-ābād*, were also dedicated to the sultan. For further discussion see; Mehmet Emin Özafşar, "Osmanlı Eğitim, Kültür ve Sanat Hayatında Hadis", *Türkler*, Vol:11, pp.356-369
[506] Yenal, (1949), p.87
[507] Özafşar, (2000), p.360
[508] Ibid, p.361

The album opens with a *jalī muhaqqaq basmala* (Fig.74). The remaining pages were all written in *jalī thuluth* script, and read as follows:

Page 2: *Wa billāhi al-tawfīq wa huwa ni'm al-rafīq*.

Page 3: *Qāla rasūl al-Makkī wa al-Madanī wa* (Fig.75)

Fig.75 The *Muhaqqaq-Thuluth* Album, Page Three. (TSM A.3652)

Page 4: *al-Hāshimī al-Qurayshī salawāt al-Allāh*

Page 5: '*alayhi wa salāmuhu ni'm al-shafī'*(Fig.76)

Fig.76 The *Muhaqqaq-Thuluth* Album, Page Five. (TSM A.3652)

Page 6: *al-Qurān shāfi' al-mushaffa'un (wa mā ḥilun muṣ addaqun)* (Fig.77)

Fig.77 The *Muhaqqaq-Thuluth* Album, Page Six. (TSM A.3652)

Page 7: *Qāla al-nabī ʻalayhi al-salām* (Fig.78)

Fig.78 The *Muhaqqaq-Thuluth* Album, Page Seven. (TSM A.3652)

Page 8: *Khiyāruqum alyānukum*

Page 9: *Manākibu fi al-ṣ alāti* (Fig.79)

Fig.79 The *Muhaqqaq-Thuluth* Album, Page Nine. (TSM A.3652)

Page 10: *wa ʻanhu ṣ allallāhu ʻalayh*

Page 11: *wa sallam inna min khiyārikum* (Fig.80)

Fig.80 The *Muhaqqaq-Thuluth* Album, Page Eleven. (TSM A.3652)

Page 12: *aḥsanuqum akhlāqan*

Page 13: ‘*An ‘Aliyyin karrama Allāhu wajhahu* (Fig.86)

Fig.81 The *Muhaqqaq-Thuluth* Album, Page Thirteen. (TSM A.3652)

Page 14: *thalāthatun in akramatuhum*

The two lines in *riqā‘* script on the fifteenth page read:

kataba hādha al-jarīdati bi al-naẓ ar wa al-im‘ān – fīmā namaqahu ibn al-Shaykh raḥamahu al-Mannān (Fig.82).

Fig.82 The *Muhaqqaq-Thuluth* Album, Page Fifteen. (TSM A.3652)

The two lines on the sixteenth page read:

Al-Sultān Aḥmad al-Thālis ibn Mehemmed Khān / Akramahu Allāhu wa wālidihu bi al-ghufrān 1136.

The translation of the album’s text is as follows:

“In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, and the Giver of Mercy / success is from God and he is the best companion and helper / born in Mecca, settled in Medina / descendant of the Hāshimī family, the Prophet from the Quraysh tribe said / -may peace and mercy be upon him – the *Qur’an* is such a beautiful mediator / the Prophet said, -may peace be upon him- / the most auspicious among you are the ones who make a straight line / while praying together / and the Prophet -may peace be upon him- / said the most auspicious among you / is the one who has values and moral standards / may God enlighten his face ‘Ali Abī Tālib said / there is a group of three

that would regard you inferior if you show honour to them. Sultan Ahmed the third, son of Mehmed *Hān*, may God have grace on him and on his father, wrote this album with intense observation and care from an early copy written by Ibn al-Sheikh may God have mercy on him, 1136/1723".

The last saying, attributed to Caliph 'Ali, was left incomplete on purpose. The complete version of the saying is "There is a group of three that would regard you inferior if you show honour to them: women, slaves and the vulgar".[509] The Sultan might have selected this particular saying for inclusion in his album as a result of his disappointment with the janissaries and the people of İstanbul.

There are two outstanding works signed by Şeyh Hamdullah that could have inspired Ahmed III in the creation of his album. The first is a *hadith* scroll (TSM-EH.2086) in the Topkapı Palace Library composed in six different scripts. If this particular album was a source of inspiration for Ahmed's album, only certain passages were copied. The Sultan selected sections in *muhaqqaq* and *thuluth* scripts that he could best imitate. It is very likely that this *hadith* scroll is the original work mentioned by the Sultan in the colophon of his album. The second possible source of inspiration is an album by Şeyh Hamdullah (IUK A.Y.5485) then in the Topkapı Palace but now in the İstanbul University Library. The text of this album is almost identical to that of the above-mentioned scroll; however, the narrow outline in the *kıt'a* format has limited the composition.

The *muhaqqaq-thuluth* album of Ahmed III is very important in defining the Sultan's actual mastery of different calligraphic hands. Ahmed III's mastery of the *muhaqqaq* and *thuluth* scripts and his ability to imitate Şeyh Hamdullah's style can best be observed in this album. Typically, when such calligraphy is executed in soot ink, difficult letter combinations and the end of brush strokes were corrected before the final completion of the work.[510] In this case, however, the whole text of the album was left as it was written with no intervention or very little correction. This is why, unlike gold overlaid copies, it displays the pure artistry of the Sultan. This

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[509] Aclūnī, (1988), Vol:I, p.325, no:1038. Also see; Vol:II, p.187, no:2212. I would like to thank Dr. M. Nedim Tan who kindly drew my attention to the complete version of 'Ali Abī Talib's saying .
[510] Derman, (1981), p.14

album is indeed proof of Ahmed III's level of perfection in the calligraphic styles of *muhaqqaq* and *thuluth*.

Literary Evidence: Chronograms and Eulogies in Praise of the *muhaqqaq-thuluth* Album

According to Müstakimzāde, the *muhaqqaq-thuluth* album was presented by the Sultan to a circle of master calligraphers. The jury included Seyyid Abdullah of Yedikule, Mehmed Rāsim Efendi, Suyolcuzāde Mehmed Necīb Efendi, the Imam of the Fātih Mosque, Süleyman Efendi, Mehmed Efendi of Bursa, Şekerzāde Mehmed Efendi, Cābīzāde Abdī Ağa and Vefāī Abdī Ağa.[511] After examining the album, members of the calligraphy jury celebrated the Sultan and his work was likened to masterpieces by early calligraphy masters. Mehmed Rāsim Efendi and Mehmed Necīb Efendi even composed eulogies and chronograms to commemorate its production (Appendix 1.4.1).[512] A line from Mehmed Necīb Efendi's chronogram, for instance, reads "Even Yāqūt[513] would have been fascinated if he could have seen this album" (Appendix 1.4.2).[514]

Other chronograms were also composed by the court poets Nedīm Efendi and Seyyid Vehbī Efendi; all of these provide the date of its completion (see Appendix 1.4.3). The last line of the chronogram composed by Mehmed Rāsim Efendi reads: *Münakkah bir murakka' yazdı Sultan Ahmed-i Kāmil* (1136), while that of Mehmed Necīb Efendi was: *Güzîn hatt-ı hümâyûn-u kilk-i Sultan Ahmed-i dânâ* (1136).

In addition, the poet Nedīm Efendi composed a chronogram that reads: *Bu nâzik hatt-ı Sultan Ahmed'e bak da duâ eyle* (1136),[515] and Seyyid Vehbī Efendi's states:

Dilârâ bir murakka' yazdı Sultân Ahmed-i Cemcâh (1136).[516]

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[511] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.77 Also see; Habīb, (1887), p.94.
[512] For Mehmed Rāsim Efendi's eulogy for the *muhaqqaq-thuluth* album see; *Dīwān*, (Author's copy), pp.16-17. For Mehmed Necib Efendi's eulogy see; Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.438
[513] Yāqūt al-Musta'simī (d.1298), the court calligrapher of the last Abbasid caliph al-Musta'sim. See; Ben Azzouna, (2009), pp.113-124.
[514] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.438
[515] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.77-78

The poet Nedīm praised the Ahmed's calligraphic skills and mastery of the art, likening him to early master calligraphers. For example, he praised the *muhaqqaq-thuluth* album and compared Sultan Ahmed III with the Timurid prince, Baysunghur (see Appendix 1.4.5).[517] These compositions are the earliest examples in Ottoman court poetry in which particular attention was paid to the calligraphic works of a sultan. They indicate to us the intellectual layers held in esteem by the members of the court and their also their approach to the arts. This is evident by the fact that the calligraphic terminology employed in these poems goes back to the common calligraphic vocabulary of the early masters of Iran, which in turn had great resemblance with the Arab school as far back as the time of Ibn Muqla (d.949).

IV.2.2 The Imperial Tughra Album (TSMK A.3653)

Fig.83 The ten Tughra-style compositions in the Imperial Album

The *Imperial Tughra Album* (TSMK A.3653) of Ahmed III, in the Topkapı Palace Library, compiled in 1140/1727, contains ten *tughra*-style compositions each designed and signed by Ahmed III (Fig.83).[518] Its lacquer binding is dated 1140/1727 and signed by Ahmed Hazīne (d.1761). Ahmed Hazīne, one of the chief illuminators and calligraphers of Ahmed III's court, was responsible for both the illumination and binding of this album, which took the form of a book-album (*düz murakka'*), meaning that the viewer was able to see two pages at once. Each of the

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[516] Habīb, (1887), p.94
[517] Nedīm, (1951), p.164
[518] A Facsimile copy of the Imperial Album was published by Professor M. Uğur Derman in Istanbul, in 2009: '*Ahmed III: Sultan and Affixer of the Tughra*', Kubbealtı, Istanbul, 2009.

ten *tughra*-style compositions was signed "Aḥ med bin Meḥ emmed *Khān*" with the sultan's pear-shaped signature in black ink, and placed to the lower left-hand side of each *tughra*-style composition.

According to Uğur Derman, these ten *tughra*-shaped compositions were first calligraphed by Ahmed III on to paper in soot ink, which were then perforated and turned into stencils by Ahmed Hazīne, and it was these stencils that were then used to transfer each *tughra* onto a different sheet of paper that was later illuminated and decorated.[519]

This album proves the calligraphic mastery of Ahmed III in designing *tughra*s, for each of the ten exhibits different textual organisation, something which would have required the highest calligraphic skills to accomplish.

The text of the album consists of five rhymed couplets, each divided into two lines and each line composed as an individual *tughra*-shaped composition. The first four and last two have been written in gold and outlined in black ink. The remaining four were penned solely in black ink. The *Imperial Album* was an extended project, as it was completed in 1727, but must have been under creation by 1725, the year of the renovation of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet in the Topkapı Palace. This can be surmised as it was at this time that the two carved *tughra*-shaped compositions formerly located to either side of the Hall's would have been placed there, and as already discussed in the previous chapter, these reappear within the *Imperial Tughra Album;* the two *tughra*-style compositions from the Hall of the Manrle of the Prophet entrance are the fifth and sixth *tughra*-style compositions in the album. As defined by Ahmed III himself and mentioned in the texts of the seventh and eighth *tughra*-shaped compositions, the album was an 'imperial gift' and a 'royal endowment' to his library.

The development of Ahmed III's library was already well underway by 1719. Dated 1727, the *Imperial Album* appears to have been presented to the library by the sultan following the consolidation in the new library of the many manuscripts that had been dispersed throughout the Topkapı Palace. Just as ordinary calligraphers praised God in the opening of their respective works and in doing so made public their virtuous

[519] Derman, (2009), pp.10, 197.

nature, so too did Ahmed III, but he instead exhibited his virtue by opening this album with two *tughra*s dedicated to the Prophet Muhammad. The *Imperial Album* was not created merely as a collection of the ten *tughra*-shaped compositions the Sultan designed; it was an expression of his moral and intellectual perfection. The album, opening with two *tughra*-shaped compositions bearing the titles of the Prophet Muhammad, was a turning point in the history of Islamic calligraphy, for by designing these two compositions, Ahmed III eventually became known as 'the designer of the *tughra* of the Prophet.' It appears that his ultimate aim in doing so was indeed to be regarded as the *tughra*-scribe (*nişancı*) of the Prophet.

Tughra-scribes, as members of the imperial council, played an extremely important role in the Ottoman court; they inspected and supervised the legitimacy of the decisions taken by the imperial council and signed the imperial decrees.[520] From this point of view, becoming the *tughra*-scribe of the Prophet was the equivalent of becoming the supervisor of the holy law (*shari'a*), or, in other words, the earthly representative of the Prophet. The importance of Ahmed III being the first and only calligrapher-sultan to design *tughra*s in the name of the Prophet cannot be overstated. Since the Ottoman *tughra* had never been employed as a calligraphic format before Ahmed III the two *tughra*s of the Prophet create one of the truly extraordinary aspects of his art. This was indeed a ground-breaking innovation which transformed the implications and textual organisations of the sultanic monogram.

The first of the *tughra*-style composition's dedicated to the Prophet reads; *Ḥaḍrat-i Sultān-i Qāba Qawsayn wa al-Ḥaramayn* (His Excellency, Sultan of the distance of two bow-lengths and the two Holy Precincts) (Fig.84).

[520] Gökbilgin, (1964), p.299

Fig 84 The first *Tughra*-shaped composition in praise of the Prophet Muhammad

This composition has been surrounded with an illuminated border of *hatayi* blooms and *saz* leaves. To the upper left side is the *tughra*-shaped endowment seal of the library of Ahmed III, which appears in all the endowments by the Sultan to his library, surrounded with an illuminated cartouche decorated with red and blue leaves. To the upper right side of the composition is a rose, referring to the *gül-i Muhammedī* (the rose of Prophet Muhammad).[521] The texts of the first two *tughra*-shaped compositions are rhymed. They too form a couplet which has been divided into two lines, each designed as a separate *tughra*-shaped composition.

The expression regarding "the distance of two bow-lengths" refers to the distance between Prophet Muhammad and the angel Gabriel who brought him the divine revelation.[522] This expression appears in the *Qur'an* (53:9); "... coming down until he was two bow-lengths away or even closer".[523] The two bow-lengths has been regarded as a state of closeness to God that was achieved by the Prophet during his ascent to heaven (*mi'rāj)*.[524] *Ṣāḥib-i qāba qawsayn* has been counted among the titles of the prophet. The two holy precincts (*al-ḥaramayn*) are the *Ka'ba* in Mecca and the Prophet's tomb in Medina.

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[521] Naza-Dönmez, (1996), p.113. Dr.Tezcan remarks, "…roses were used to symbolize the Prophet on calligraphic panels bearing inscriptions about Muhammad, and panels with this composition are known as rose panels." [Tezcan, (2009), p.69].
[522] Derman, (2009), p.20
[523] The *Qur'an*, (2004, tr. Abdel Haleem), p.347
[524] Yavuz, (2005), p.134 For further discussion see; Elmalılı, (1979), Vol:VII, p.4577

The second of the *tughra*-shaped compositions praising the Prophet reads; *Muḥammadun sayyid al-kawnayn wa al-thaqalayn* (Muhammed, master of this world and the next, of man and jinn) (Fig.85).

Fig. 85 The Second *Tughra*-shaped Composition in praise of the Prophet Muhammad

As evident, the text of this composition also consists of the titles of the Prophet Muhammad, praising him as the master of this world and the next (*sayyid al-kawnayn*) and the master of man and jinn (*sayyid al-thaqalayn*).[525] Ahmed III borrowed the expression "*sayyidu'l kawnayn wa al-thaqalayn"* from the thirty-fourth couplet of the *Mantle Ode* (*Qaṣīdat al-Burda*), composed by the poet Muhammad Sharaf al-Dīn Abū-'Abdallah al-Būsīrī (d.1295), who was also a celebrated calligrapher.[526] Al-Būsīrī's couplet reads; *Muḥammadun sayyid al-kawnayni wa al-thaqalayni / Wa al-farīqayni min 'urbin wa min 'ajami* (Muhammad is the master of this world and the next, of man and jinn / and the leader of Arabs and the non-Arabs). The text of the second *tughra*-shaped composition praising the Prophet can therefore be linked to the Mantle Room, commissioned by Mehmed III (1595-1603), in the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, for the interior of this room is decorated with Iznik tiles bearing sections from the *Mantle Ode* of al-Busīrī in bands written in *jalī thuluth* script.[527] In addition to the *Mantle Ode* there is further evidence in the

[525] The word *al-thaqalayn* refers to two *thaqal*s, namely man and jinn. For further discussion see; Elmalılı, (1979), Vol:VII, p.4681
[526] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.411
[527] Aydın, (2004), p.25

Qur'an and *hadith* literature regarding the Prophet's title as "master of man and jinn".[528]

As has already been stressed, these two *tughra*-shaped compositions are among the most significant achievements of the Sultan. Bearing titles of the Prophet, referring to the *Qur'an* (53:9) and the Mantle Ode (34th Couplet) of al-Būsīrī, Ahmed III composed these *tughra*s both for and in the name of the Prophet Muhammad. In other words, these two *tughra*s were designed by the '*tughra*-scribe Ahmed III' for the *real* Sultan, the Prophet; "the master of this world and the next, of man and jinn". To my knowledge, no calligraphic composition exhibiting this content, written in the name of the Prophet, had been designed before Ahmed III's compositions. By employing such content and in the *tughra* as a calligraphic format, the Sultan obviously aimed to create a symbolic link or connection between the Prophet and the Ottoman dynasty. Thus the sultan dedicated and transformed the first two *tughra*-shaped compositions of his *Imperial Album* into monograms of the Prophet. The second *tughra*-shaped composition has also been surrounded with an illuminated border consisting of *hatayi* blooms and *saz* leaves. This illuminated border only surrounds the first two *tughra*-shaped compositions.

The two *tughra*-shaped compositions opening the album indicate Ahmed III's desire to assemble the titles of the Prophet alongside his own in a single compilation;[529] this was done on purpose in order to display the titles of the Prophet and the Ottoman sultan in unison. More importantly, by using the *tughra* as a calligraphic format, the Sultan moulded and crystallised the titles of the Prophet in the form of the Ottoman royal blazon, this emphasizing his own caliphate.

The third *Tughra*-shaped composition of the *Imperial Tughra Album* reads; *Mūcebince 'amel oluna* (Let it be done as required) (Fig.86).

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[528] Jinns were being who came to listen to the Prophet Muhammad when he began reciting the *Surat al-Jīn* from the *Qur'an* for them, and there were both believers and non-believers among them. See; Elmalılı, (1979), p.5381-5417. Similar titles of the Prophet have also been used in the opening sections of literary and historical works compiled in this period. Ironically, Destārī Sālih Efendi the chronicler, opens his accounts on the Patrona Halil Revolt and the unfortunate end of the reign of Ahmed III with almost the same phrase in praise of the Prophet; "… *sayyid al-thaqalayn wa nabī al-ḥaramayn*…" See; *Destārī Sālih Tārihi*, (ed. Bekir Sıdkı Bakyal), TTK, Ankara, 1962, p.1.

[529] The sultanic desire of assembling his name with that of Prophet Muhammad can best be observed in *dīwān*s of Islamic court poetry. It is not by chance that in these *dīwān*s, odes praising the ruler follow those in praise of the Prophet.

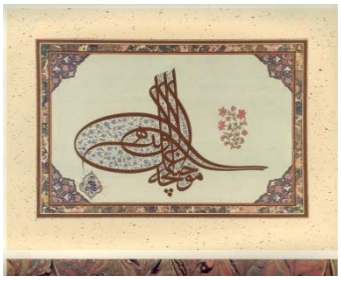

Fig. 86 The third *Tughra*-shaped composition

In this composition, the Sultan designed the phrase commonly used to signify approval of a decree, *mūcebince 'amel oluna* (should be done as required) in the *tughra* format. Traditionally, this phrase was placed to the right of the *tughra* in the sultans' *firman*s to confirm the decree.[530] Employing a version of this phrase, it appears Ahmed III wished to prove his mastery in designing *tughra*-shaped compositions. However, in placing this decree-confirming phrase just after the titles of the Prophet, Ahmed must have aimed to obtain divine grace for his *firmans*, or, in other words, for his decisions. The placement of the confirmation phrase within the calligraphic *tughra* format can be interpreted as a sultanic logo emphasizing the imperative nature of the *tughra*.

The fourth *tughra*-shaped composition of the album reads; *Şāh Ahmed bin Mehemmed Hān el-Muzaffer Dāimā* (Sultan Ahmed, son of Sultan Mehemmed Hān, the always victorious) (Fig.87).

Fig. 87 The Fourth *Tughra*-shaped Composition

[530] 'A common mistake is pronouncing "mūcebince" as "mūcibince". The word "mūcebince" refers to a confirmation of a high ranking officer to a stately document or transaction.' Pakalın, Vol:II, p.560

This composition is the official *tughra* of Ahmed III, employed on the *firman*s issued and on the coins minted during his reign. By placing his official *tughra,* the ultimate, noble sign (*alāmet-i şerīfe*) of the state, within this album, the Sultan conferred his royal approval on the other nine compositions within it. Furthermore, by the placement of his official *tughra* in the album he conveyed his approval for the inclusion of the two *tughra*s he composed praising the Prophet. In fact, by placing his official *tughra* just after the two in praise of the Prophet, Ahmed III created a visual link between Prophet Muhammad and himself as the Sultan. This was an attempt not previously made by any calligrapher, let alone a calligrapher-sultan, in Ottoman history.

The fifth *Tughra*-shaped composition of the album reads: *Cihân mâliki Hākān-ı Emced* (King of the world, the most honourable ruler) (Fig.88).

Fig. 88 The Fifth *Tughra*-style Composition

Along with the sixth *tughra* composition of the album, discussed below, the fifth forms a couplet in praise of Ahmed III himself. Following the first two *tughra*s bearing the titles of the Prophet, the Sultan then demonstrated his own status in the fifth and sixth *tughra*-shaped compositions. Ahmed III, in fact, united the titles of the Ottoman sultan and the Prophet in a common motif, the *tughra* format. In doing so he converted the *tughra* into a multi-aspect, almost sacred monogram which was no longer limited to the names and titles of the members of the Ottoman household, but one which could also include the names and titles the Prophet.

The sixth *tughra*-shaped composition reads: *Şeriat Sāliki Sultan Ahmed* (Follower of the holy law, Sultan Ahmed) (Fig.89).

Fig. 89 The Sixth *Tughra*-shaped Composition

The sixth *tughra*-shaped composition of the album also includes the titles of Ahmed III, and when combined with the previous one, extols the sultan as the most honourable ruler, the "follower of the holy law". This title, "follower of the holy law," was previously used by Bostanzāde Yahyā Efendi, one of the famous chief-judges of the early seventeenth century, in his *Tārih-i Saf Tuḥfetü'l Ahbāb* to glorify Sultan Ahmed I.[531]

It is then the case that in this sixth *tughra*-shaped composition, the Sultan presented himself as a model ruler. By declaring his dedication to the rule of the holy law, he in fact underlined the *raison d' êe* of his reign and consequently the legitimacy of his rule. Ottoman religious authorities have always unified the concept of following the holy law with two stately virtues: justice (*'adālet*) and a God-inspired desire to seek the way of truth (*hidāyet*).[532] Here, the employment of the *tughra* as a platform for exhibiting the sultan's self-definition is a major innovation. As already noted above, it was the fifth and sixth *tughra*-shaped compositions bearing the titles of the Sultan that had previously been placed on either side of the entrance to the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet in 1725, two years before the production of this album. Unlike the others in the album, it is only these two *tughra*-shaped compositions which were ever employed as monumental inscriptions. In addition, these appear to be the only two calligraphic compositions that appear in both an album format and in an epigraphic context simultaneously.

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[531] Sakaoğlu, (2003), p.208
[532] See; Ismail Ankaravi, *Minhacü'l Fukara*, Insan Yayınları, (1999), p.29-30.

The seventh *tughra*-shaped composition reads; *İhsān-ı hümāyūnum olmuşdur* (It is my imperial gift) (Fig.90).

Fig.90 The Seventh *Tughra*-shaped Composition

The 'imperial gift' mentioned in the text of this composition undoubtedly referred to the album itself as the sultan presented it as a royal endowment to his own library, perhaps as a memento. He therefore must have considered it to be an imperial gift which would be viewed in his library by future readers as a souvenir from a sultan who was not only a bibliophile but also a master-calligrapher.

The eighth *Tughra*-shaped composition reads; *İhsān-ı Padişāhānemden olmuşdur* (It is from among my royal endowments) (Fig.91).

Fig. 91 The Eighth *Tughra*-shaped Composition

The texts of the seventh and eighth *tughra*-shaped compositions both emphasize the fact that the album was a gift and endowment of the Sultan. In the eighth *tughra*-shaped composition the Sultan describes the nature of his gift. As stated clearly in the text of the composition, it is a part of his royal endowment. Prior to the reign of Ahmed III, no member of the Ottoman household had the chance to either present or

endow their own works to a self-endowed library. Ahmed's awareness of this appears to be evident in the seventh and eighth *tughra*-shaped compositions, for they stress the royal privilege of the gift endowed to his library.

The ninth and tenth compositions of the album must again be viewed as a two-part unit. The ninth *tughra*-shaped composition, which included the first part of the Sultan's signature, reads; *Eser-i hāme-i Şāh Ahmed bin Mehemmed Hān* (The work of the reed-pen of Sultan Ahmed, son of Sultan Mehemmed Hān) (Fig.92).

Fig. 92 The Ninth *Tughra*-shaped Composition

The tenth *tughra*-shaped composition, the second part of the Sultan's signature reads: *Katabahu Ahmed Khān Ḫādimü'l Ḫaramayn* (Ahmed Hān, servant of the two holy precincts, wrote it) (Fig.93).

Fig. 93 The Tenth *Tughra*-shaped Composition

The two holy precincts mentioned in the second signature refer to Mecca and Medina. The title "servant of the two holy precincts" was first used by Salāh al-Din al-Ayyūbī (d.1193), the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty, possibly due to his victory

against the crusaders.[533] This title was then acquired by Sultan Selīm I (r.1470-1520) following the conquest of Egypt and was subsequently used by the Ottoman sultans until the abolition of the caliphate in 1924.

The *Imperial Tughra Album* is unique both in terms of its textual organisation and in its calligraphic design. No similarly-produced album consisting only of *tughra*-shaped compositions is known to us. One may ask why the *Imperial Album* lacks a religious opening phrase such as the *basmala*. This can be explained by the fact that the album's production was in the way of being imperial propaganda, as its name, 'Imperial Album' (*Murakka'-ı Has*), reveals. The lack of inclusion of the *basmala* is not surprising as to include it would not meld with the predominantly secular nature of the album.

As highlighted above, the binding of the album was signed by the court illuminator Ahmed-i Hazīne and dated 1140AH/1727AD. As his nickname 'Hazīne' indicates, Ahmed was employed in the royal treasury (hazīne-i hümāyūn).[534] Both the front and back covers of the binding bear a poem inscribed in *nasta'līq*, consisting of twenty-eight couplets.[535]

The first part of the poem on the front cover reads;

"How excellent is the Sultanic Album in which are written *tughra*s,

Each of which is like the beautiful flower-garden of the Sultan

Ahmed the *Ghāzī* (warrior), that world-emperor,

His powerful hand is the key that opens agreeable corners

Light of the eye of Sultan Mehmed the Fourth,

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[533] Yavuz, (1997), p.26

[534] The nickname 'hazīne' was commonly used by the employees of the royal treasury in early 18th century. Enderunī Ahmed Refʿī's biography of court artists (tezkire), dated 1131AH/1718, includes the biographies of artists with the same nickname such as Mīr Hüseyin-i Hazīne, Mīr İbrāhim-i Hazīne, Abdī-i Hazīne. See: Meriç, (1956), p.164, 165.

[535] A similar application is found in the so-called Gazneli Mahmud Album in the Istanbul University Library [T.5461]. This album, dedicated to Sultan Mehmed IV (r.1648-1687) in 1097AH/1685AD, was kept in the palace library until the early nineteenth century. Its front and back covers also bear poems in *nasta'līq* script. Ahmed III might have seen this album or similar albums, which may have inspired him to have a binding with poems on it for his own album. For detailed information on the Gazneli Mahmud Album see; Derman, (1974), p.17-21.

Ahmed III is unique, and he has no second

Whatever that skilled Sultan wishes,

The movement of his pen takes it under his power

Eternal providence has decreed for that sultan

That wherever his pen rules shall be under his governing hand

Whatever his highly cultured nature desires

Will, with all its perfection, be taken hostage by the beauty of his invention

In the end, the lines of honoured script have rendered unequalled

His glorious *tughra* is its most beautiful form"

The poem continues on the back cover;

"May God damn the enemies of his state

And may those who help him always be powerful

That sultan is a gift from God to the world, otherwise

Such designs would have been impossible even with a thousand sketches

Each of these *tughra*s is agreed by all to be

The collective evidence that proves this claim

The song of his pen is the sword that cuts through judgements

The drops of his writing are the centre that protects the world

May the decrees of his pen always be in force

May all regions and districts of the earth be under his command

Our prayer is this: May the life of his state be lengthened

May the Lord's own bounty be near his person"[536]

Similar poems, in praise of an album are found in prefaces of Timurid, Aqqoyunlu and Safavid albums. The preface to the Shah Tahmasp Album (IUK F.1422), for instance, contains a similar poem in praise of the album and the Shah.[537]

Ahmed III was certainly aware that courtly albums were produced primarily for presentation to a ruler or a member of the ruling class. So for whom did he produce the *Imperial Album*? The first two *tughra*-shaped compositions composed in the name of Prophet Muhammad provide an answer. Considering himself to be the *tughra*-scribe of the Prophet, Ahmed III dedicated and 'presented' his *tughra* album to the Prophet. Being spiritually linked to Prophet Muhammad had an established, important role for the legitimacy of the Ottoman dynasty.[538] By compiling this album, Ahmed aimed to re-establish his legitimacy and his caliphal prestige in the eyes of the upper-class who would view the album. Thus, one could argue that the *Imperial Album* was created to project a similar social message as illustrated genealogies, or royal portrait albums, which was that the Ottomans were the last of the legitimate dynasties to rule the world before the end of time.[539] The clear originality of Ahmed III's art is evident in his personal involvement with the process of legitimization as attained through calligraphy. From this point of view, one could argue that the *Imperial Tughra Album* marked the beginning of a new era in which the Sultan was no longer inaccessible. The era beginning with the reign of Ahmed III witnessed a new sultanic image which found expression in calligraphy, literature and music composed by the sultans.

IV.2.3 Individual Album Leaves

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[536] This poem has been translated into English by Irvin Cemil Schick. See; Derman, (2009), pp.15-17.
[537] Thackston, (2001), p.2
[538] As Tülay Artan remarks, "The Ottoman sultan had always been associated with a Saviour-figure. Hence the conquest of Constantinople was reinterpreted, identifying – at least by implication – Mehmed II with the Prophet". Selīm I, on the other hand, was recognised as the Mahdi/Saviour/Messiah in certain court circles. For further discussion see; Artan, (2006), pp.413-414.
[539] For further discussion on the legitimizing nature of historical texts, genealogies and portrait albums see; Serpil Bağcı & Massumeh Farhad's "The Art of Bibliomancy", *Falnāma – The Book of Omens*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2009, pp.20-25.

In addition to the two calligraphic albums, Ahmed III also compiled individual album leaves. The album page exhibiting the signed, *jalī thuluth Qur'anic* verse, *ḥasbi allāhu wa ni'mal wakīl* (TSMK-3652) (Fig. 94). This page supports the fact that the Sultan imitated the works of contemporary master calligraphers and applied themon album leaves, for the original which inspired the Sultan's composition is the *ḥasbi allāhu wa ni'mal wakīl* in *thuluth* script in the Hocazāde Album[540] (TSMK-MR1123), signed by Hocazāde Mehmed Efendi, the calligraphy teacher at the Mosque of Firūz Ağa (Fig. 95). The only difference between these two works is the colour of ink employed. Hocazāde Mehmed wrote his in soot ink whereas Ahmed III used red ink. As already discussed above, Ottoman scribes frequently copied celebrated compositions in order to prove their own calligraphic skills. In some cases such copies bear the word '*naql*', literary meaning 'adaptation'.

Fig.94 The *Jalī Thuluth* verse by Ahmed III, copied from the original by Mehmed Hocazāde (TSM, 3652)

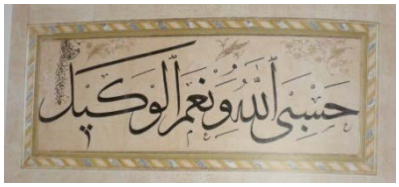

Fig.95 The *Jalī Thuluth* verse Signed by Mehmed Hocazāde, dated 1689 (TSM M.R. 1123)

Dated 1689, the sultan's copy of the *jalī thuluth* verse from Hocazāde Mehmed's original clearly proves Ahmed's skills at imitating recognised calligraphic masters. Both of these works belong to the transitional group of *jalī thuluth* compositions,

[540] Istanbul (1983), p.288. Demiriz (1982), p.33

meaning that favourite phrases composed in this script were used in multiple settings, from albums to panels. It was the case that this particular verse was copied by many calligraphers, but in this particular instance, Ahmed's intention was not just to pen the same verse but to make an exact replica of Hocazāde Mehmed's work.In doing so, this verse displays the Sultan's calligraphic skills and the sharpness of his aesthetic perception since the finished work exhibited no assistance from an illuminator like the overlaid gold compositions discussed above.

A slight difference in composition can be seen between these two album pages in the placement of the signiatures. Hocazāde Mehmed signed his *jalī thuluth* album leaf in *naskh;* however, his signature is not inscribed horizontally. In order to fill the empty space above the wide curve of the *lam,* the last letter of the composition, he arranged his signature vertically. Ahmed III, on the other hand, by locating his drop-shaped signature within the curve of the *lam*, followed Hocazāde Mehmed's care in terms of the use of space while introducing his own invention.

CHAPTER FIVE

Re-employing the Royal Monogram: The Introduction of the *Tughra* as a Calligraphic Format

Chapter Five: Re-employing the Royal Monogram: The Introduction of the *Tughra* as a Calligraphic Format

'A *tughra* is the Sultan's official monogram attached to state documents to confirm their legality.'[541] However, as has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, it is not only the monogram and/or the signature of the sultan but a distinguished and prestigious calligraphic format. In the first part of this chapter the origins of the Ottoman *tughra*, its evolution, calligraphic features and structure, and ties with royal identity will be surveyed. The main discussion will be about the introduction of the *tughra*-style composition by Ahmed III, who designed this new calligraphic presentation. In particular, his ground-breaking *tughra*-shaped compositions in the *Imperial Tughra Album* (TSMK A.3653) in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library, with their innovative calligraphic designs and content, will be studied.

V.1 A Short Introduction to the History of the Ottoman Tughra

In practice, a *tughra* is the stylised calligraphic representation of the name and titles of the Ottoman sultans and princes. The word *tughra* means 'sign' in ancient western Turkish (*Oğuz Türk çesi*) and in general was used to designate the signature of the sultan. According to the eleventh-century lexicographer Mahmūd Kaşgārī, the word *Tughra* originated from *tugrāgh*, meaning 'a seal or signature of a king'. As a final 'gh' regularly does not get pronounced in Western Turkish, the word became *tughra* (طغرا) in Ottoman.[542] The Persian term *nishān* and the Arabic *tawqi'* have also been used in Ottoman Turkish with the same meaning. Whenever the words *tevki'-i refi'-i hümāyūn,*[543] *nişān-i şerīf,*[544] and '*alāmet-i şerīf*[545] were used in Ottoman documents, as they frequently were, the *tughra* is what was actually meant. Due to its highly artistic and complicated design, in time the *tughra* became accepted as a 'sign' rather than a calligraphic composition.

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[541] Imperial Ottoman Fermans, 1987, p.11
[542] Kutlukan, (1987), p.11
[543] 'The most exalted, high sign'
[544] 'The noble sign'
[545] 'The noble sign'

Using epistemological sources for '*tughra'*, different theories have been advanced to explain its form. Paul Wittek suggests that the *tughra* was meant to represent the shape of a *tughri*, a mythological falcon-like bird that was the totem of the ancient western Turks.[546] According to the early twentieth-century lexicographer Şemseddīn Sāmī, '*tughra'* originates from '*tughrul*,' which means falcon.[547] Poems composed in praise of the *tughra*s of Ahmed III, which will be briefly discussed in the following pages, highlight a metaphorical resemblance between the phoenix (*'anqā*) and the *tughra*. Bosworth, Deny and Siddiq, however, in their profound article '*tughra*', in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, state that the word is derived from *tūğ*, the horsehair standard of the Turks.[548]

According to Uzunçarşılı, the early Ottoman *tughra* was inspired from its Mamluk predecessors, and the practice of designing *tughra*s passed from the Ayyubids to their successors, the Mamluks.[549] The Mamluk *tughra* was formed by juxtaposing the exaggerated elongated vertical letters of *alif*, *lam*, *ṭ a* and *lam-alif* in the name and title of the sultan (Fig. 96).

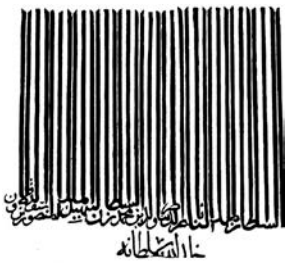

Fig. 96: The Mamluk *Tughra* of Sultan al-Nāsir Muhammad b. Qalawūn

During the Seljuq period, a short phrase containing a prayer or praise, also termed a *tughra*, was used; these were created by private scribes, called *tughrāī*.[550] Uzun çarşılı demonstrates that those of the Ottomans were first employed in the fourteenth century by Anatolian principalities.[551] The earliest

[546] Wittek, (1948), p.315
[547] Şemseddīn Sāmī, (1899), p.884
[548] Kutlukan, (1987), p.11
[549] Uzun çarşılı, (1941), p.105
[550] Ibid, p.103
[551] Ibid, p.103

coin stamped with a *tughra* is a silver coin dated 1374, bearing the *tughra* of Saruhan-oğlu Ishāk Beg, the ruler of the Saruhanoğulları principality.[552]

According to the nineteenth-century historian Joseph Von Hammer, it was Murād I (r.1359-1389) who put his hand in ink and placed it above the official degrees to confirm their legality (Fig.97).[553] This statement has been corroborated by İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, who notes that "common people used to believe that the *tughra* was a stylized depiction of the left hand of Sultan Murād I".[554]

Fig. 97: The *Tughra* of Sultan Murād I, *Waqfiyye* dated 1366, (TSM SP. 155)

The nineteenth-century Turkish scholar Miralay Ali Bey states that the practice of Turkish rulers' creating a stamp with their hands to confirm the authenticity of decrees stretches back to the time of Cengiz *Hān* (r.1206-27). According to Ali Bey, Cengiz Hān would put his hand in red ink and then stamp it on his decrees to confirm them; therefore, in ancient Turkish documents the word used for decree was *al tamga* (the red seal).[555]

The location of the *tughra* on official documents is the subject of a different argument. One may well ask why the *tughra* was located above the text of the decrees and not below them. According to Müstakimzāde, when Arabs wrote letters before the arrival of Islam they would place the name(s) of the recipient at the top. This changed with the arrival of Islam as it was the Prophet Muhammad who asked

[552] Ibid, p.104
[553] Hammer, (1911), p.215
[554] Baltacıoğlu, (1993), p.69
[555] Ali Bey, (1918), p.54

his community to place their names first, at the top, above the name of the recipient.[556] It is possible, therefore, that the placement of the *tughra* has its roots in the Prophet's approval of this practise.

The titles placed on the *tughra* have been varied over time and were dependent on the reigning sultan. The royal title *Hān* was introduced into the *tughra* during the reign of Sultan Bāyazid I (r.1389-1402). A second, additional title, *muzaffer* (the victorious) was added to the *tughra* of Murād II (r.1421-51). In the *Tughra* of Mehmed II (r.1451-81), the word *dāimā* (always) followed *muzaffer*; this therefore meant the phrase 'always victorious' was placed just after the Sultan's name. From the reign of Selīm I (r.1512-20) onwards, the word *muzaffer* was unified with the Arabic definite article '*al-*', meaning 'the victorious.' The word *shāh*,' which originally was a title used by the rulers of Persia, was retained under the Ottomans until the reign of Sultan Mehmed III (r.1595-1603), who stopped employing it. It reappeared in the *tughra* of Sultan Ahmed I (r.1603-17) but was again removed under Mahmud I (r.1730-1757). Mustafa III (r.1757-74) used the title *Hān* on his *tughra* until the fifth year of his reign, but then replaced it with *shāh* his reign.[557] Under Abdülhamīd I (r.1774-89), the title *Hān* was again replaced with *shāh*.

The earliest extant Ottoman *tughra* applied to an official document was that of Orhan Beg[558] (r.1326-1359), and was placed on a *waqf* document (AK 10), dated 1324 (Fig.98).[559] This early *tughra* reads 'Orhan bin Osman' (Orhan son of Osman). The three *nūn*s, the last letter of each word, have all been extended to the left in parallel, horizontal lines to create three concentric bowls.

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[556] Müstakim-zade, (1928) p.19
[557] Kutlukan, (1987), p.13
[558] Acar, (1999), p.229
[559] Uzun Çarşılı has written an articl *Belleten*, Vol: V, 1941, pp.23-51.

Fig. 98 The *Tughra* of Orhan Beg, *Waqfiyye* dated 1324, (AK. 10).

The classical form of the Ottoman *tughra* was only established during the reign of Sultan Murād I (See Fig. 97). In his *tughra*, the three concentric bowls created in the *tughra* of Orhan Beg have been stretched to form a double arch, which is to say that two concentric ovoids were created. This element of the composition was to remain a feature of the *tughra* for the rest of its history. Due to their egg-like form, these two rounded lines to the left of the actual *tughra* were called *beyze* (egg).

The *beyze* was but one of three basic parts of the standard Ottoman *tughra*, each of which originated in the composition of Orhan Beg's *tughra*. The terms awarded to each were based on the shapes they resembled. For example, the names of the sultan and his father first compressed under Mehmed II,[560] was called either *sere* (palm of the hand) or *kürsī* (base). The two large egg-shaped roundels to the left, which were the elongated strokes of the letters *nun* or *dal*, were named *beyze*[561] (egg). As stated by Kutlukan, 'a beyze did not represent a specific letter, but was a stroke included to complete the traditional outline.'[562] The three vertical lines, which have remained the same form since their use on the *tughra* of Orhan Beg, were named *tuğ* (the pole-standards bearing the horse-tail). The two parallel lines to the right, the extensions of the two *beyze*s, were called *kol* (arm) or *Hançer* (dagger) (Fig.99).

[560] Kutlukan, (1987), p. 13
[561] This term Originated from the Arabic *bayḍ*.
[562] Ibid, p.13

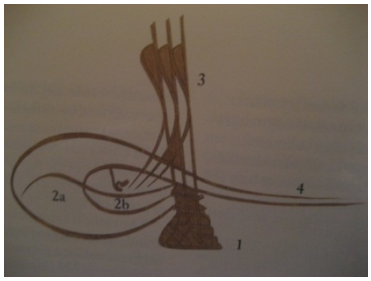

Fig. 99 1-Beze/Kürsi, 2a-Outer *Beyze*, 2b-Inner *Beyze*, 3-The *Tuğs*, 4-The *Kols*[563]

As the *tughra* continued in usage, it at times was more elaborated. For example, the earliest known 'drawn in gold' *tughra*s date from the reign of Mehmed II,[564] while some *tughra*s bearing the name of Bāyazid II are the oldest examples of illuminated *tughra*s. After Bāyazid II, it was common for the eyes of the letters *mim*, *za* and *fa* to be filled in with blue. Under Süleyman the Magnificent, writing and illuminating the *tughra* became an artistic team-work on its own.

Further symbolism has also been applied to the *tughra.* According to Kemal Özdemir, the author of the *Ottoman Coat of Arms*, in addition to its text the *tughra* consists of visual signs including three horsetails (the *tuğ*s), two flags (the *beyze*s), one throne (the *kürsi* or *sere*) and two swords (the *Hānç er*s).[565] Religious symbolism was attached to the *tughra* as well for it was not only seen as an imperial monogram, but also as the most significant sign that could appear on a document. In his poem in praise of the *basmalah*, Ahmed Paşa of Bursa, a famous fifteenth-century court poet, likened the *basmalah* to the *tughra* of the undoubted *firman*, meaning the *Qur'an*.[566]

The Ottoman documentary heritage, particularly following the reign of Sultan Mehmed II, is ornamented with deeds and commands bearing the illuminated *tughra* of the ruler. The most essential '*tughra*-headed' official documents are: *firmans*,[567] *berat*s,[568] *menşūr*s,[569] *mülk-nāme*s,[570] *temlik-nāme*s,[571] *sınır-nāme*s,[572] *ahit-*

[563] The scheme has been borrowed from *Imperial Ottoman Firmans*, p. 11
[564] For example, *Waqfiye* of Sultan Mehmed II. , dated 15 June 1475, Ayşegül Nadir Collection.
[565] Özdemir, (1997), p.56
[566] Ahmed Paşa, (1966), p.1
[567] Originally *farmān* (Per.) used to mean an imperial eddict.
[568] Originally *barāt* (Ar.) used ti refer to a royal diploma or an imperial privilege.

*nāme*s,[573] and *waqfiyye*s.[574] In addition, the *tughra* was also placed on official buildings, coins and silverware. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the *tughra*, regarded as a 'royal emblem,' was placed on identification documents including passports and postage stamps.[575]

Documents headed with the *tughra* are important not only because they certify the evolution of the imperial monogram's usage, but also because they track the formation of the *dīwāni* calligraphic style, which was only used for official documents. It becomes evident that the evolution of the Ottoman *tughra* and the *Dīwāni* style share a common past. Due to this, the calligraphic interpretation of the Ottoman '*tughra*-headed' documents below shall be based on the *Dīwāni* style's *nasta'liq* background as well as the *thuluth* basis of the *tughra.*[576].

Little has been written on the calligraphic qualities of the Ottoman *tughra*. Articles by Hannah E. McAllister, Annemarie Schimmel, Barbar Rivolta, Stuart Cary Welch, Mohammad Yusuf Siddiq and sub-chapters in books by M. Ugur Derman, Ali Alparslan, Muhiddin Serin, M. Şinasi Acar provide compressed introductions and general outlines, but these lack an historical approach to the subject as well as technical discussions. However, an article by the art-historian Zarif Orgun on the textual context of the *tughra*, discussing the additional royal titles worked into the composition, particularly in the sixteenth century, is of importance due to its literary approach.[577] Furthermore, a profound argument on the artistic qualities of the *tughra*, which takes into account its historical background, has been introduced by C.E. Bosworth, J. Deny and Muhammad Yusuf Siddiq in their article, '*Tughra*', in the

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[569] Originally *manshūr* (Ar.), used to indicate royal patent of rank in Ottoman Turkish.
[570] Composite word, combining *mulq* (Ar.) and *-nāmah* (Per.), used in Ottoman Turkish to indicate a deed or document relating to property rights.
[571] Composite word, combining *tamliq* (Ar.) and *-nāmah* (Per.), used in Ottoman Turkish to indicate a brief of ownership.
[572] Composite word, combining *sınır* (Tr.) and *-nāmah* (Per.), used in Ottoman Turkish to indicate a title deed issued to solve lawsuits resulting from issues of land ownership. These were issued by the *Kadi* by imperial decree.
[573] Composite word, combining *ahd* (Ar.) and *-nāmah* (Per.), used in Ottoman Turkish to indicate a document relating to a treaty or a military capitulation.
[574] 'Property deeds' (Ar.)
[575] Bosworth, (2007), p. 465
[576] The earliest examples of the style of *dī wānī* were called *zulf-i 'arūs* (bride's hair, Per.), and were used by Aqqoyunlu officials (See Alparslan, pp:95).
[577] Orgun, Zarif. 'Tuğralarda el-Muzaffer Daima Duası ve Şah Ünvanı, Şehzade Tuğraları, Mehmed II'nin Tuğra, Imza ve Mühürleri', *Türk Tarih Arkeologya ve Etnografya Dergisi*, Vol. V, Istanbul, 1949, pp.201-220.

Encyclopedia of Islam. Briefly on the structure of the *tughra,* it is a highly stylised and artistic calligraphic composition based on traditional Timurid *thuluth* inscriptions, which were composed following a hand movement from the lower right to the upper leftof the insignia. This movement, which was particular to the style of *thuluth*, was an essential feature of the technical peculiarities in composing the *tughra*.

To date, nothing has been written on the *tughra*-style compositions created by Ahmed III. In the following section, this very original and highly important calligraphic innovation will be studied. The varied context and compositions of these *tughra*s, their impact on late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century *Tughras* will be surveyed as well. Above all, Ahmed III's role in the creation of this innovation, both as a patron of calligraphy and a calligrapher, will be briefly discussed.

V.2-The Evolution of the Tughra under Ahmed III:

Until the reign of Ahmed III, *Tughra*s were composed solely for official use. They were written by special court scribes (*nişancı* tr.) and were placed above the sword-shaped lines, in the *dīwānī* script, in *firman*s and official documents alike.

Individual *tughra* compositions were very rare before Ahmed III's reign although some unusually large panels bearing illuminated *tughra*s of Süleyman the Magnificent and Sultan Ahmed I are known.[578] It was Ahmed III who first considered the possibility of the *tughra* as an individual calligraphic form, and who created the earliest *tughra*-style compositions. In addition, both during and after his reign, the royal *tughra* were seen as calligraphic compositions and signed like calligraphic albums and manuscripts. Therefore, it may be noted that apart from his *Tughra*-style compositions, the Ahmed III composed and signed his royal *Tughra* for artistic as well as official purposes. The artistic nature of his *tughra* can also be observed in the examples signed by various court scribes, whose signatures appeared to the lower left of the *tughra*. Among these those signed 'Mustafa Paşa el-Tevki'ī ', 'tezkire-i sābık İbrahim muhāfız-ı Ağriboz', and 'İsma'il vekī l-i

[578] Artan, (2006), p.410

tevki'ī ', dated respectivally 1130, 1133, 1134 A.H. (1718, 1721,1722 A.D.) have been published[579]. The signatures of these high-ranking officials indicate that the composition of the *tughra* was a new artistic fashion established among the bureaucratic class in the 1720s. Abdi Efendi, for instance, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, was celebrated for his excellence in drawing *tughra*s.[580]

The *tughra* of Sultan Mehmed IV (r.1648-1687), in the Cleveland Album (CMA. J. H. Wade Collection 44.492.67.8X15.3/4) in the Cleveland Museum of Art, composed by Silahdar Mehmed Paşa, also proves that drawing *tughra*s became a fashion among high-ranking Ottoman officials by the end of the seventeenth century (Fig. 100).

Fig. 100 The *Tughra* of Sultan Mehmed IV, Signed by Silahdar Mehmed Paşa

Most of these *tughra*s were signed with signatures beginning with the Persian phrase '*eser-i hāme-i* …', or '*eser-i kilk-i* …,' meaning 'the work of the pen of ….' The Persian phrases utilised in these official signatures, found on numerous copies of Ahmed III's *tughra*, continued to be used until the end of the eighteenth century. The reasons for the introduction of 'new' Persian phrases in the eighteenth-century Ottoman secretarial vocabulary shall be studied individually.

Why did Sultan Ahmed III first introduce the imperial *tughra* into the repertoire of Ottoman calligraphy? His desire for re-arranging, re-designing and revitalizing the *tughra* was the main driving force behind this change in its usage. This is exemplified by the fact that for the first time in the history of Ottoman art, the imperial *tughra* was placed on the covers of calligraphic albums during Ahmed III's reign.

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[579] See, *Osmanlı Padişah Tuğraları*, (1980), p. 242

[580] Suyolcu-zade, (1942), p.89 Interestingly, Suyolcuzāde uses the expression of 'drawing a *tughra'* (*tuğra tersimi*), indicating that the *tughra* was regarded as an independent form of calligraphy that was not written, but drawn.

There are two main reasons why Ahmed III was interested in the form of the *tughra*, the first being his profound interest in different calligraphic compositions and forms. The second reason for this was the tradition of European 'royal blazons,' which must have been introduced to the Ottoman court after Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi's journey to Paris. Under Ahmed III, the *tughra* gained a heraldic character, as observed by its epigraphic use on the restoration panel of the Great Barrage (Buyuk Bend), in İstanbul. The imperial *tughra* was rarely placed above monuments' epigraphic panels before Ahmed III. The earliest known example is an epigraphic *Tughra* of Sultan Murād II, located above the foundation inscription of the Sungur Çavuş tower in Thessaloniki, dated 833AH/1430AD.[581] A second noteworthy example is the *tughra* of Sultan Murād III located above the main portal of the Nishanci Mehmed Paşa Mosque, built by Sinan. However, these applications are exceptional and in the case of the latter, the use of the epigraphic *tughra* is closely linked to the profession of the mosque's founder: '*nişancı*' (*tughra*-scribe).

The placement of the *tughra* above royal epigraphic inscriptions, such as foundation inscriptions, became standard procedure during Ahmed III's reign, when the *tughra* gained its heraldic and epigraphic nature which transformed it into an Ottoman 'coat of arms' in later times. However, it is clear that the change in the text of the *tughra* is one of the most important calligraphic revolutions of this period. Related to this, the introduction of the Arab printing press in 1727 should be mentioned. The printing press caused a decline in the copying of manuscripts, and subsequently decorative *jalī* scripts and *tughra*-shaped compositions, intended to be framed and hung on walls, became the scribes' main interest.

V.3 The Invention of Tughra-shaped Composition

As mentioned above, Ahmed III composed official *tughra*s and, in addition, he created *tughra*s with different, unofficial content. In his *tughra* Album (TSMK A.3653), Ahmed III, for the first time in the history of the Ottoman *tughra*, penned *tughra*-shaped compositions of religious and poetic texts, which must have been due

[581] Ayverdi, (1982), p.360 I would like to thank Prof. Uğur Derman drew my attention to this resource.

to his personal desire to combine the imperial form of the *tughra* with highly respected religious quotations. It was this textual innovation that transformed the *tughra* into, on a wider scale, an Ottoman 'coat of arms,' and in doing so created a new message that united the most respected 'divine phrase' with the imperial monogram.

The *tughra* achieved its stylistic criteria and perfect proportions by the early nineteenth century at the hands of Mustafa Rākım Efendi (d.1829), the calligraphy teacher of Sultan Mahmud II.[582] However, the re-organisation of the *tughra* by Mustafa Rākım was solely about its form, [583] and it was in the eighteenth century, under the personal care of Ahmed III, that the text of the *tughra* was reconsidered and came to be regarded an individual calligraphic form. Ahmed III redesigned the composition of his own *tughra* and in doing so created a new fashion enabling any suitable text to be composed in the form of a *tughra*. Therefore, while Turkish scholars, such as Ismail Baltacıoğlu[584] and Ali Alparslan[585], suggest that the re-organization of the *tughra* can be dated to Mustafa Rākım in the early nineteenth century, the above-mentioned *tughra* album provides evidence that an unparallel development of the *tughra* took place earlier under Ahmed III. Therefore, I would argue that just as he can be credited with establishing the use of *jalī thuluth* script for calligraphic panels, the rearrangement of the form and the text of the *Tughra* began under Ahmed III.

The difference between the use and content of the Ottoman *tughra* before and after the reign of Ahmed III reflects the impact of the Sultan on this highly important calligraphic form. Before him, the imperial *tughra* was created by officials called *nişancı* who were not professional calligraphers.[586] The *tughra* began to be 'composed' by professional calligraphers during and after the reign of Ahmed III. In this sense, it can be argued that Mustafa Rākım was not the one who re-vitalised the *tughra* but was responsible for perfecting its composition in terms of proportion following the increased interest in this calligraphic form in the eighteenth century.

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[582] Derman, (2009), p.130
[583] For further discussion on Rākım's innovation see; Derman, (1983), pp.1613-161
[584] Baltacıoğlu, 1993, p. 41
[585] Alparslan, 1999, pp. 117-118 Also see; Derman, (1982), pp.16-23
[586] Ayverdi, (1953), p.56

*tughra*s composed of different texts became in vogue following the truly successful, experimental ten *tughra*-shaped compositions of Ahmed III found in his Imperial Album. The success of this new type can best be observed by the increasing number of eighteenth-century *tughra*-shaped compositions imitating the prototypes of Ahmed III. After the reign of Ahmed III, therefore, the *tughra* shall be analysed as two main categories: the 'official *tughra*s' and *tughra*-shaped compositions.

V.3.1 The Tughra of Ahmed III: Structure and Influence

It is necessary to analyse the structure of Ahmed III's official *tughra* in order to distinguish the technical and aesthetic peculiarities between it and the innovative *tughra*-style compositions. The official *tughra* of Ahmed III was composed in bold *thuluth* and reads: *Hān Ahmed bin Mehemmed al-muzaffar dāiman* (Mehmed's son Khan Ahmed, the always-victorious) (Fig. 101). Unlike the early *tughra*s, its composition is is harmonious in the organization of its letters. Like all royal *tughra*s of the eighteenth century, this one formed part of the aesthetic research which resulted in the excellent composition of Mahmud II's *tughra* in the early nineteenth century. The *tughra* of Ahmed III, whether it was first designed by the Sultan himself or by an ordinary *tughra*-scribe (*nişancı*), followed the criteria of the *tughra*s as determined by those of Ahmed II and Mustafa II in that the two *beyd*s are very much circular. Compared to the earlier imperial *tughra*s of the second half of the seventeenth century, Ahmed III's is more compact and well-designed in its composition and usage of space.

Fig. 101 The Imperial *Tughra* of Ahmed III, composed by Ahmed III

The earlier *tughra*s of İbrahim I (1640-1648), Mehmed IV (r.1648-1687) and Suleyman II (r.1687-1691) lack the compact quality of the letters' design which is evident in the *tughra* of Ahmed III and those which came after his reign. The finesse of this *tughra* can be explained by the calligraphic skills of Ahmed III. The same finesse can also be observed in his *tekke*-ware *tughra*s as well. Therefore, Ahmed III re-established and developed the common qualities of the *tughra,* beginning with the compact, harmonious, well-designed letters of his own *tughra*.

The *tughra* of Ahmed III is the earliest to have been used as an imperial monogram in different media beyond its typical usage on coins and *firmans*. In these different applications of the monogram, he widened the application of the *tughra* to other uses like that of a European blazon. For example, none of the official *tughra*s before Ahmed III's were hung on the walls of the Scribes Hall in the Topkapı Palace, where it was employed twice. The qualities of his *tughra*, which he also composed, are shared with similarities in his signed calligraphic panels as both portray his imperial identity.

Fig. 102: The Imperial *Tughra* of Ahmed III, by Ahmed III, 46x31 cm. TSML GY 1560.

The *tughra* gained individual character with its new visual presentation created by Ahmed III (Fig. 102). Besides being the 'noble sign' ('*alāmet-i şerī fe*) of official documents and coins, it became a new calligraphic format that could be composed be various means, including all sorts of short texts, names of saints and short prayers. The imperial sign, which had been composed by official secretaries (*nişancı*), therefore became a subject of interest for professional calligraphers.

After Ahmed's reign, this innovative approach did not gain prestige until the 1750, when , besides *tughra*-style compositions, official *tughra*s in the individual panel format were composed in the style of Ahmed III, such as the panel bearing the *Tughra* of Sultan Osman III (1754-1575) in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, İstanbul (TIEM 4153) (Fig. 103). It may therefore be suggested that the evolution of the official *tughra* and of *tughra*-style compositions went hand-in-hand during the eighteenth century.

Fig. 103: The Imperial *Tughra*-panel of Sultan Osman III in the Style of Ahmed III (TIEM, 4153)

This panel bearing the *tughra* of Osman III not only resembles the panels depicting the *tughra* of Ahmed III, but also features some of the same decorative elements, such as the miniature paintings of the *Kaaba* and the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad. These illustrations, which disappear completely in the second half of the eighteenth century, document the roots of a transitional style referring back to late seventeenth-century *firman*s and *Dalāil al-Khayrāt* manuscripts in which such miniature paintings frequently appear.[587] Among these, copies of the *Dalāil al-Khayrāt,* by Suleymān Jazūlī (d.1465) are of great importance as they include numerous miniature paintings of the *Kaaba* and the tomb of the Prophet, in addition to miniature *hilyeh* texts documenting the foundation of a new decorative repertoire. It is certain that it was the increasing power of vizier and mufti households in the second half of the seventeenth century that gave birth to such innovations in the arts of the book and calligraphy in the Ottoman Empire.

[587] Naza-Dönmez, (1996), p.113

The two aforementioned panels bearing the official *tughra* of Ahmed III that were hung on the wall facing the main entrance in the Chancery Hall of the Topkapı Palace, perhaps during the renovation of the third courtyard,[588] are the earliest extant *tughra* panels found in the Topkapı Palace. It was not by chance that these were located in the Chancery Hall, better known as the *Kubbealtı*, which served as the Imperial Council Hall. On its adjoining wall with the Pavilion of Justice, sultans would watch the council's regular meetings from behind the gold glossed bars of a window referred to as *kafes* (the cage). By placing two panels bearing his *Tughra* to either side of the *kafes*, Ahmed III intended to emphasize his presence and authority over the council meetings. High officials and viziers attended meetings in the Council Hall four times a week, where they discussed the affairs of state or determined the results of cases in the presence of the two *tughra* panels.

Besides introducing his *tughra* panels for interior use, the Sultan placed his *tughra* above epigraphic inscriptions as well. The restoration panel of the Great Barrage (*Büyük Bend*) is of importance as it is the earliest example of this type of *tughra* application in the eighteenth century. The earliest known example of a *tughra* placed above a foundation inscription, however, is the *tughra* of Murād III above the portal of the Mosque of Nişancı Mehmed Paşa, mentioned above (Fig. 104). As mentioned by Gülru Necipoğlu, it was Mehmed Paşa's duty to inscribe the sultan's monogram on official documents, hence the title of chancellor (*Nişancı*) became an inalienable component of his identity.[589] Necipoglu also notes that his nickname, '*boyalı Nişancı'* (painted chancellor), may have alluded to the inks and paints he used in designing illuminated *tughra*s.[590]

[588] Yerasimos, (2000), p.219
[589] Necipoğlu, (2005), p. 409
[590] However, Necipoğlu doesi not mentioned the significance of Murad III's *Tughra* above the portal of the Nisanci Mehmed Paşa Mosque.

Fig. 104: The Foundation Inscription of the Mosque of Nişancı Mehmed Paşa Bearing the *Tughra* of Murad III

It was really only in the fields of calligraphy and epigraphy that the official *tughra* came into prominence. The earliest extant manuscript binding displaying an Ottoman *tughra* bears the *tughra* of Ahmed III was sold in the rooms of Antik AŞ. Auction House in İstanbul on 15 December 2002 (Fig. 105).[591] The application of the *tughra* on a leather binding is indicative of an innovative, heraldic use of the monogram which was entirely new to the Ottoman book arts.

Fig. 105: The *Tughra* of Ahmed III on an album binding

It was also under Ahmed III that the *tughra* began to be employed by goldsmiths. A bejewelled box in the form of a public fountain, sold at Sotheby's in London, on 5 April 2006, provides evidence of this (Figs. 106, 107). The *tughra* of Ahmed III is engraved on the inner cover of the box, located above the *basmala* and the *tawhīd* formulation. Similar to the above-mentioned bookbinding, this box is the earliest

[591] Antik AŞ. Auction catalogue, 15 December 2002, p.260.

extant metalwork on which the Ottoman *tughra* was used for heraldic and decorative purposes.

Fig. 106: Detail from the cover of box sold in Sotheby's London, 5 April 2006, with the *tughra* of Ahmed III

Fig. 107: The Sotheby's box in the form of an early eighteenth-century public fountain in İstanbul, 5 April 2006

V.3.2 Tughra-shaped Compositions of Ahmed III

The official *tughra* continued its aesthetic development until the end of the nineteenth century and attained its apex of perfection with Sāmī Efendi (d.1912), the court scribe and *tuğrakeş* (*tughra*-designer) of Sultans Abdülhamīd II (r.1876-1909) and Mehmed V Reşād (r.1909-1914). As mentioned above, *tughra*-shaped compositions, including the '*tekke*-ware' examples discussed below, flourished following the prototypes created by Ahmed III. As the legal owner of the Ottoman royal blazon, Ahmed III composed radically 'innovative' *tughras* with unofficial texts. These examples need to be analysed in order to explain the technical and aesthetic aspects of this innovation.

The *tughra*-shaped compositions created in the mid-eighteenth century, in the wake of those designed by Ahmed III, were called *tekke*-ware since they were highly in

demand among members of *tekkes* (sufi-lodges). The name '*tekke*-ware' is most likely due to the creation of highly original, creative *tughra*-shaped compositions by dervish scribes for the decoration of *zāwiyah*s and *tekke*s.[592] Until the early nineteenth century, court scribes rarely composed *tekke*-ware *tughra*s, or, in other words, *tughra*-shaped compositions. This can be related to the sincere respect court scribes had for the imperial association of the *tughra,* which traditionally was praised with honorific titles such as '*alamet-i şerife* (noble sign) in the texts of various *firmans*, or official documents.

V.4 The Hadith Tughra and Its Application on Tiles

Fig. 108: The *Hadith-tughra* by Ahmed III, TSML GY 947

The *Hadith-tughra* of Ahmed III is an individual *tughra*-shaped composition that was not placed into the Imperial Album, and which has received little scholarly attention until now. In creating this *hadith-tughra* Ahmed III selected a famous saying of the Prophet Muhammad, *Shafā'ati li ahl-i'l qabāiri min ummatī* ('My intercession is for those who commit greater sins in my community'),[593] and composed it as a *tughra* panel (Figs. 108, 109). The signature of the Sultan appears in a couplet divided into two lines, located to lower left and right sides of the composition; the signature couplet reads, *Şefi' al-müznibī nsin şeh-i iklī m-i ma evhā – Hadī s-i pākini Sultān Ahmed eylemiş tuğrā* (You are the intercessor for

[592] Aksel, (1967), p.34
[593] Al-Aclūnī, (1988), Vol:II, p.10. Al-Aclūnī has pointed many important resources with regard to the origins of this hadith.

sinners on the day of judgment... You, the king of the country of *mā evhā* – Sultan Ahmed has transformed your pure *hadith* into a *tughra*). In this phrasing a relationship is made between the Prophet Muhammad and Ahmed III, for the expression 'King of the country of *mā evhā*' refers to the Prophet, and '*mā evhā* (what he revealed) is the last word of the tenth verse of the *Surat al-Najm*, which reads 'and revealed to God's servant what he revealed.' [594] Furthermore, 'The king of the country of *mā evhā*' indicates the miracles of the *mi'rāj* (the Prophet's ascent to heaven) and points to the intimacy of the Prophet and God.[595] Most importantly for this study, however, is that the Prophet is described as 'the King,' establishing a common link with Sultan Ahmed III.

Fig. 109: The *Hadith-tughra* by Ahmed III, TSML GY.425

According to Mehmed Süreyyā Bey, the author of the *Sicill-i Osmānī* (*Ottoman Records*), this *Tughra*-style *hadith* was among the calligraphic compositions presented by the Sultan to the Mausoleum of Abā-Eyyūb al-Ansārī in İstanbul.[596] The chronicler Rāşid Effendi notes that after the Sultan and the high ranking officials left the palace on 12 *rabī' al-awwal* 1127 (1714A.D.) because of the Iranian campaign, they decided to held the *mawlūd*[597] ceremony in the Mosque of Abā-Eyyūb al-Ansārī.[598] The *hadith-tughra* must have been presented to the mausoleum during or after this ceremony.

The copier of the *Dīwān* of Ahmed III, Ali Emīrī Efendi, composed a poem in praise of the *hadith-tughra* of the Sultan, using the literary method of adding a stanza

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[594] *The Qur'an*, (trans. M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, 2004), p.347. For further discussion on the opening verses of chapter of the Star (*al-Najm, Sūra:53*) see; Colby, (2008), pp.17-21.
[595] Colby, (2008), pp.39-41
[596] Mehmed Süreyya Bey, (1994), p.15
[597] *Mawlud* is the name of a long poem, also called *Wasīlat al-Najād*, in praise of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, written by Süleyman Çelebi of Bursa, in the fourteenth century, and it has become an essential tradition to recite the *mawlud* in 12 rabi' al-awwal, every year, commemorating the birth of the Prophet.
[598] Rāşid, (1282), Vol:IV, p.38

to a couplet, called '*tesdis'*. The repeated couplet in this poem is the couplet signature of Ahmed III mentioned above: *Şefi' al-müznibī nsin şeh-i iklī m-i mā evhā – Hadī s-i pākini Sultān Ahmed eylemiş tuğrā* . This poem indicates the appreciation that the *Hadith-tughra* of Ahmed III received. In the dedication title of the *Dīwān,* Ali Emīrī Efendi likened Ahmed III to the Abbasid master calligrapher Yāqūt al-Musta'simī (d.1298) as well as the Safavid court calligrapher 'Imād al-Hasanī (d.1615).[599]

The decoration surrounding the *Hadith-tughra* (see Fig. 108) includes innovative applications which are also noteworthy. On the upper right-hand side of the *Hadith-tughra* is a miniature painting of the tomb of the Prophet in Medina. The depiction of Mecca and Medina refers to the Ottoman sultan's royal title, *khādim al-harī mayn al-sharī fayn,* meaning 'the servant of the two holy cities.'[600]

To my knowledge, the *Hadith-tughra* is the only calligraphic composition of Ahmed III which was applied on tiles; tiles produced in the Tekfursarayı kilns in İstanbul included extraordinary samples bearing the *Hadith-tughra* of the Sultan. The first application of the *Hadith-tughra* on ceramic is found on a single *Tekfursaray*-ware polychrome tile in the Nevşehir Museum, and is an outstanding example uniting the fashion of the *tughra* with a passion for re-vitilising the art of Iznik (Fig.110).[601] As discussed previously, this tile was brought to the Nevşehir Museum from the Great Mosque of Nar Köyü, built in 1728,[602] and so it can be inferred that this tilewas produced in 1728 or a bit earlier. The depiction of the *Masjid-i Nabawī* that appears

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[599] The heading of the *tesdīs* by Ali Emīrī Efendi reads; "S*ultan-i mağfūr-i müşarünileyh ... hazretlerinin şefāatī li ehli'l kebāiri min ümmetī hadīs-i şerīfini rağbet-şiken-i hatt-i Yākūt ve 'Imād olacak mertebede hārika-i mahāret ve letāfeti hāiz olmak üzere kalem-i mu'ciz rakam-i şāhāneleriyle tuğra-i garrā şeklinde tahrīr buyurdukları levha-i yektā-i ziynet-itilās bir mahall-i mübārekde manzūr-i fakīr olarak ziyāretiyle müşerref olunmuş ve ketebe mevkiinde kezālik hatt-ı dest-i mülūkāneleriyle işbū beyt-i tahiyyāt-āyātın tektīb buyurulduğu g* [illegible] *münāsibde pertev-efza ve manzūme-i belāgat ve mārifete şehbeyt-i yektā olan matla'-i bedi'-i feyyāzānelerinin tesdīsi*". The holy place mentioned in Ali Emīrī's note must be the mausoleum of Abā-Eyyūb al-Ansārī in the Eyüp district in Istanbul.

[600] The Ottomans claimed the title of Caliph of the Muslim world from the reign of Bayazid II until that of Abdülhamid II. Abdülhamid II's claim to the caliphate and the ensuing pan-Islamic movement marked a shift. In his promulgation of the constitution of 1876, article four stated that 'His Majesty the Sultan, as Caliph, is the protector of the Muslim religion.' Bain (2001), p.220

[601] Nevşehir Museum authorities could not provide an inventory number for this item. The tile has been published by E. Emine Naza-Dönmez. See; Naza-Dönmez, (1996), p.110.

[602] Naza-Dönmez, (1996), p.109

on the upper right-hand side of the *Hadith-tughra* tile was obviously transferred from the original composition.

Fig. 110: The Tekfursaray-ware tile with the *Hadith-tughra* of Ahmed III

In the original composition seen in Figure 100, a floral illumination was placed to the upper left-hand side of the *Hadith-tughra* to balance the depiction of the *Masjid-i Nabawi*. Here, the composition both of the tile and the panel is entirely innovative. Based on my research the *tughra* was never illuminated individually other than in these examples, where it has been used in the context of pictorial depiction. The classical illumination of official *tughras* in *firman*s never portrayed bunches of flowers. One could argue that a common change in the style of illumination in the *firman*s and calligraphic panels took place under Ahmed III.

The second application of the *Hadith-tughra* on ceramic is on a group of polychrome tiles, also produced in the Tekfursaray kilns, located in the Harem Mosque (Akağalar Mescidi) of the Topkapı Palace (Fig.111).[603]

[603] I would like to thank Professor Filiz Yenişehirlioğlu who drew my attention to these tiles.

Fig.111: The *Hadith-tughra* of Ahmed III in the mosque of the Harem in the Topkapı Palace

The *Hadith-tughra* has been applied on six square tiles, placed on the east-facing wall of the mosque. Unlike the single tile discussed above, this composition features a truly unique application with the use of under-glaze painted blue and red pigment. The letters *'ayn*, *ta* and *ya,* in the word *shafāatī* , have each been outlined in red. As discussed earlier, the word ' *'ati'* in red, hidden within the word '*shafāatī* ' means 'disobedient slave,' which, in this case, perhaps indicates the composer of the *tughra*, Ahmed III. Located in the heart of '*shafāatī* ,' the word' *'ati'* indicates the Sultan's will to obtain divine grace through the intercession (*shafāat*) of the Prophet Muhammad.

A similar inscription in multi-colour letters, applied on tiles, is found in the tomb of Sultan Selīm I (r.1512-1520), as discussed in Chapter 3.[604] No other inscription with multi-coloured letters on tiles is known to us. As paying visits to the tombs of previous Ottoman sultans was a courtly ritual, there is good reasons to think that Ahmed III was influenced by the multi-coloured calligraphy on tiles in the tomb of Selīm I. The unsurpassed heroic image of Selīm I as the greatest conqueror in Ottoman history must also have played a role in this inspiration. Ahmed III must have considered this similar application as a souvenir from the tomb of his great ancestor. It is important to note that the tiled composition in the Harem Mosque and the single tile in the Nevşehir Museum are the earliest applications of the Ottoman *Tughra* on tiles.

V.5 Literary Evidence: Poems in Praise of the Tughras of Ahmed III

Leading court poets of the time, such as Nedīm (d.1730) and Sāmī (d.1744), composed eulogies (*medhiye*) in praise of the *tughra* of Ahmed III, creating a new literary form which was not seen earlier in classical Ottoman literature. This indicates the increase in the significance of the *tughra* in the eyes of the Ottoman

[604] The tile panels of the tomb of Selīm I have been published in Arli&Altun, (2008), p.149.

ruling class, as well as the fact that the personal passion and desire of Ahmed III influenced the arts as well as literature.

These poems, basically praising Ahmed III's calligraphic works and, in particular, his *tughra*, provide crucial information about the quality of the Sultan's calligraphy, especially as calligraphic terms were used in describing their details. Nedīm, Sāmī and Seyyid Hüseyin Vehbī composed chronograms for the *tughra*-shaped compositions in the Imperial Album of Ahmed III, while there are other works by Nedīm and Sāmī which individually praise the calligraphic works of the Sultan.

The eulogy composed by Nedīm in praise of Ahmed III's *Tughra* counts the qualities of the imperial *Tughra*, and praises it as the sign obeyed by the kings of the world (see Appendix 2.5.1).[605] Nedīm finished the eulogy with a prayer: 'May coins and the *khutba* be honoured with the name of Ahmed III... May his *tughra* honour the imperial orders of glory and excellence.'[606]

In his eulogy praising the Imperial Album, Nedīm states:

"Although the calligraphic style of *thuluth* was granted to Şeyh [607]

Now, his *thuluth* is re-granted to the most exalted Sultan..."[608]

The significance of the *tughra*, both as an imperial monogram and a calligraphic form, reached its peak when such eulogies or chronograms were composed by numerous court poets in praise of it. The *tughra* of Ahmed III is the sign of a new period, based on his patronage and artistry. The eulogy in praise of the *tughra* of Ahmed III by Sāmī Efendi, for instance, not only describes the qualities of the *tughra* but also the skills of the Sultan. Here, the *tughra* became a literary tool in order to praise the Sultan, which is exceptional and very rare in the history of Ottoman literature. The chronogram composed for the *tughra* highlights the inherent significance of such a composition, as chronograms were typically only composed for important, official events, imperial monuments, and royal births and deaths. The eulogy by the poet Sāmi in praise of the *tughra* of Ahmed III is another example

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[605] *Diwān*, (1951), pp.133-136.
[606] Ibid, p.136.
[607] Şeyh Hamdullah (d.1526), the court calligrapher and calligraphy teacher of Sultan Bayazıd II.
[608] *Diwān*, (1951), p.134

indicating the importance among the Ottoman upper class of the *Tughra* compositions penned by the Sultan (see Appendix 2.5.2). Sāmi also composed a chronogram for Ahmed III's *tughra* (see Appendix 2.5.3), but the longest extant poem composed in praise of the Sultan's *tughra* is a *qasīda* (ode) by the poet Seyyid Vehbī, consisting of 38 couplets (Appendix 2.5.4).

*Dīwān*s of the court poets and secondary sources on court literature emphasize the importance of the *tughra* in the eyes of the eighteenth-century Ottoman upper-class. Poems written in praise of *tughra*s therefore deepen our understanding of the '*tughra*-mania' of the eighteenth century. Of these, Nābī Efendi's (d.1712) poems in praise of *tughra*s composed by the Vizier Cafer Paşa and Abdi Paşa, the governor of Haleppo, are worthy of mention.[609]

V.6 The Waqf-tughra of the Library of Ahmed III

As has already been discussed, Ahmed III built a library in the centre of the Topkapı Palace's third court, situated behind the Audience Chamber. Imperial inscriptions and seals appear on virtually every manuscript in the court libraries, particularly in those produced in the Mughal, Safavid and Ottoman realms.[610] The attitude of stamping courtly manuscripts and albums, both those which were royal gifts or imperial commissions, with seals and inscriptions, was common practice among Ottoman sultans dating from the reign of Sultan Bāyazid II.

The endowment seal of the library of Ahmed III displays the utmost originality in its *waqf-Tughra* composition, placed beneath three lines of *thuluth Quranic* text that reads, *al-hamdu-lillāhi allazi hadāna li-hāza wa mā kunnā linahtadiya law lā an hadānā Allāhu* (...Praise be to God, who guided us to this: had God not guided us, We would never have found the way).[611] The *waqf-tughra* below this verse reads; *Waqafa Ahmed bin Mehemmed Hān* (Ahmed, son of Mehemmed *Hān*, endowed it) (Fig. 112).

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[609] *Dīwān-i Nabi*, (1997), pp.133,136
[610] Seyller, (1997), p.244
[611] The *Qur'an* 7:43.

Fig. 112: The Endowment Seal of the Library of Ahmed III

Since the earliest extant examples of *tughra*-shaped compositions were created by Ahmed III, one may argue that the *tughra*-shaped composition on this endowment seal was also composed by the Sultan himself.

CHAPTER SIX

Completing the New Image of the Calligrapher-Sultan: Ahmed III's Innovative Signatures

Chapter Six: Completing the New Image: The Sultan Mastey of Signatures

VI.1 A Short Introduction to Signatures in Islamic Calligraphy

There are two main types of signatures in the history of the art of Islamic calligraphy; 'royal signatures' and 'calligrapher's signatures'. Royal signatures were generally applied to ruler's decrees and were considered to be a royal monogram. In Islamic calligraphy, the *tawqi'* script, which originated from the intensive form of the word '*waqqa'a*,' is derived from the Arabic verb '*waqa'a'* (to sign), and designates the indicating or registering of a ruler's decree.[612] It has been noted that in Abbasid times, the term came to indicate the official signature of the ruler written in the form of a short slogan.[613] In Fatimid decrees, the text was written in a small, rounded hand, which was in two cases juxtaposed against the authenticating signature, written in a larger version of the same connected script,[614] while the Mamluks sultans used *tughra*s that consisted of their names and honorific titles, constructed using the juxtaposed vertical lines of the letters *alif* and *lam*. While of interest, the historical and technical background of 'sultanic' signatures and their relation to the Ottoman *tughra* is not subject matter to be dealt with in this study.

The second type of signature, the calligrapher's, was generally applied to the colophons of manuscripts and the last pages of albums. Traditionally, where the calligrapher's signature is concerned, the phrase '*katabahu...*,' meaning '... wrote it, stands out as the most common formula for signing a text in Islamic calligraphy. The use of the phrase '*katabahu*' is found as far back as the Abbasid period, when it was used in the works of the famous Abbasid calligraphers Yāqūt al-Musta'simī (d.1298) and Ibn al-Bawwāb [Ali b. Hilal] (d.1221) (Fig.113).[615]

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[612] Blair, (2006), p.167
[613] Stern, (1964), p.126-8
[614] Blair, (2006), p.205
[615] James (1988), p.155; Dere (2001), p.30

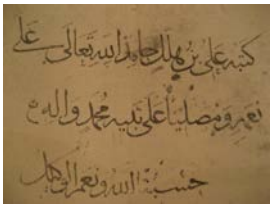

Fig. 113: Ali b. Hilal's Signature (Baha Ersin Collection – Published in *Al-Khattat al-Baghdadi Ali bin Hilal* by Süheyl Ünver)

Besides these two main types of signatures, there is a commonly used third one, that of the craftsman, beginning with the Arabic phrase 'عمل / *'amal-*' (made by...). The phrase '*amal-i ...'* has also been used in the arts of the book, primarily for signing miniature paintings, but rarely for signing calligraphic works. In addition to miniature paintings, this phrase was used to sign works of decorative art. Occasionally this phrase was also used by architects and craftsmen working on the decoration of monuments, including epigraphic inscriptions.[616]

In Ottoman calligraphy, the most commonly used phrase to denote a signature was the classical Arabic phrase beginning with '*katabahu...*'[617], written in a straight line, until innovative and alternative signatures, in different forms, were introduced by Sultan Ahmed III. Ottoman calligraphers, including the famous Şeyh Hamdullah, mostly signed their works using the '*katabahu...*' phrase.[618]

Frequently used phrases used by calligraphers to sign their works, in addition to the most common one of كتبه /'*katabahu...* (... wrote it)' were: حرره */ḥarrarahu...* (... inscribed it), قلده */qalladahu...* (... imitated it), مشقه */mashshaqahu...* (... exercised it), نمقه */namaqahu...* (... penned it), نسخه */nasaẖahu...* (... copied it), رقمه */raqamahu...* (... wrote it with diacriticals), سطره */saṭarahu...*(... put it in lines), سوده */sawwadahu...*(...

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[616] The architect Sinan, for instance, signed the Buyukcekmece Bridge, the only monument he ever signed, en route to Edirne, with the phrase '*amal-i Yūsuf b. Abdallah'*, 'The work of Yusuf b. Abdallah'. For further discussion see, Necipoglu, (2005), p.131-32.

[617] In the Redhouse Lexicon, one of the finest Turkish-English dictionaries, 'ketebehu', the Turkish version of the Arabic '*katabahu*', is defined as '... the first word of a colophon to a manuscript'.

[618] Until the eighteenth century, there were no precise documents granting a calligraphy master permission to use a signature phrases, particularly that of '*katabahu*.' eighteenth The *ijazat-nameh*, or 'calligrapher's license,' came into being in the mid-eighteentheighteenth century and was awarded to the pupil at the end of his education. The *ijāzat-nāmeh* documented the master granting permission for the new scribe to use the *katabahu* phrase under his text. For further discussion see: Mohammad Ali Karimzadeh Tabrizi, *Ijāzat-nāmeh*, London (1999), pp.1-5.

drafted it).[619] These phrases, which were in continuous, albeit occasional, use, indicate the characteristic features of the work. For instance, the phrase '*qalladahu...*' was used in order to indicate that the text calligraphed was a precise copy of an earlier work, while the *'mashshaqahu...*' phrase was used to sign calligraphic models or exercises.

The signature phrase was followed by the name, titles and nick-name of the calligrapher, which could also be followed by his father's name.[620] In some cases, attached to the Persian suffix زاده /*-zāde* (...'s son), the calligrapher's father's profession was mentioned; such as *Şekerzāde*[621] (Sweetseller's son), *Ḥakkākzāde*[622] (Engraver's son), or *Imāmzāde*[623] (*Imam*'s son).

In addition, calligraphers placed titles as a part of their signature, common ones of which were: السيد /*al-sayyid* (ar. descendant of the PMuhammad), الحاج /*al-ḥājj* (ar. pilgrim), الحافظ القران /*ḥāfiz al-Qur'an* (ar. one who knows the entire *Qur'an* by heart), الامام /*al-imām* (ar. prayer leader)[624], الشيخ /*al-shaykh* (ar. head of a religious order), دده /*dede* (tr. leader of a *mawlawī* lodge). In some cases, the calligrapher's teacher's name was mentioned following the Arabic expression من تلامذ /'*min talāmiz-i...'* (among the students of...) as a sign of respect.[625] According to Mohammad Ali Karimzadeh Tabrizi, the earliest example of a manuscript containing both the names of the calligrapher and his master was written by Ahmad Qarahisārī (d.1556), whose signature line reads: 'I, the weakest of the weak and the dust of the feet of the poor, Ahmad Qarahisārī, pupil of Sayyid Asadullah Kirmānī, 944 A.H.(1537 A.D.).'[626]

At times, adjectives such as الفقير /*al-faqī r* (the poor), الحقير /*al-haqī r* (the insignificant), المذنب /*al-mudhnīb* (the sinner), الراجى /*al-rājī* (the hoping one)[627], and العبيد /*al-□abī d* (the slave), all of which were used to refer to the humble nature of

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[619] Berkin, (1992), p.73 Also see; Derman, (1970), p.728
[620] The custom of mentioning one's name with his father's (name + *bin* + father's name) must have been derived from the similar application in Arabic.
[621] Şekerzāde Seyyid Mehmed Efendi (d.1752)
[622] Hakkākzāde Mustafa Hilmi Efendi (d.1851)
[623] Imāmzāde Mehmed Efendi (d.1751)
[624] According to Shiite doctrine *imam* also means 'the successor to the Prophet' or 'the caliph'.
[625] Derman, (1970), p.729
[626] Tabrizi, (1999), p.3
[627] In this expression 'hope' indicates a hope for divine grace and blessing.

the calligrapher, were placed after the signature line. Occasionally, a short praying clause was linked to the end of the signature; frequently used praying clauses were غفرله /*ghufira-lahu* (May God forgive him) and غفرذنوبه /*ghufira-dhunūbuhu* (May God forgive his sins).

Generally the calligraphic style used for the signature was the same as that used for the text composed. Calligraphic works in *nasta'liq* script, for instance, were usually signed in *hurdeh nasta'liq* (minor *nas-ta'liq*). However, in some cases works written in *thuluth* and *naskh* could be signed in *khatt-i ijāzah* (the diploma script).[628]

In some cases, the signature was followed by a short '*nisbah*' phrase, indicating the city in which the work was written, generally in the format of فی شهر /'*fī shahr-i* ...' (in the city of ...). An alternative expression, فی بلدة ال.../'*fī baldat al-* ...' (in the region of ...) was also used. It shall also be mentioned that the date, usually only the year, was written out in Arabic, and was rarely given in numerals. The month was occasionally mentioned following فی شهر /'*fī shahr-i* ...' (in the month of ...).[629]

VI.2.Innovative Signatures of Sultan Ahmed III:

The signature-style introduced by Ahmed III can be grouped in three categories; 'pear-shaped', '*tughra*-shaped' and the 'couplet' signatures. The variety of signatures used by the Sultan to sign his calligraphic works forms an important aspect of the technical innovations of his art. Until his innovative signature styles came into being, Ottoman calligraphers signed their works in a horizontal line placed beneath their work.[630] It was Ahmed III who, for the first time, created 'innovative' signatures that featured different functional and formal applications.

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[628] *Hatt-i ijāzah*, a multi-functional style, was occasionally used for official purposes such as diplomas of sufis and scholars. Derman (2002), p.40

[629] The word for 'city' and 'month' is the same in Arabic; *al-shahr* الشهر

[630] There are some exceptions in monumental inscriptions in which the signature phrase was placed in a vertical format. Sheikh Hamdullah's signature in the foundation epitaph of the Bayazid Mosque, and Hasan Çelebi's signature to the left of the foundation epitaph of the Suleymaniye Mosque, were placed vertically in order to visually stand out from the main text. Similar applications can also be seen in Safavid architectural insciptions, as in the case of the foundation inscription on the portal of the Mosque of Shaykh Lutfallah, in Isfahan. For further discussion see: Blair, 2009, pp.421-23.

To deepen our understanding of the Sultan's innovative signatures, the difference between 'innovative' and 'traditional' signatures must first be discussed. Until the introduction of framed calligraphic panels in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century by Hāfız Osman and his royal pupils, Sultan Mustafa II and Ahmed III, Ottoman calligraphy consisted of the art of copying manuscripts, composing albums and designing architectural inscriptions. In an interpretation on the literary form of the *gazel* in Ottoman poetry, Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı, the authors of *the Age of Beloveds*, list many 'interdisciplinary' aspects and innovations of Ottoman literature in the early eighteenth century that surprisingly can be paralleled with calligraphy production at the same time. Andrews and Kalpaklı suggest that '...apart from technical flourish, the genre is also characterized by extreme consciousness as the writers read each other, copy each other, and continue each other's work in an ostentatious way, thereby establishing themselves as a group... who are instantly fashionable and instantly recognizable'.[631] When the art of calligraphy is concerned, this statement could be read as, '...apart from technical flourish, the genre is also characterized by extreme consciousness as the *calligraphers* repeat each other, copy each other, and continue each other's work in an ostentatious way, thereby establishing themselves as a group... who are instantly fashionable and instantly recognizable'. Understanding the 'doctrinal' system of education Ottoman calligraphers underwent is important in terms of defining and appreciating the free and 'reformist' nature of Ahmed III's signatures.

In order to observe the departure from the 'classical', one needs to understand who was responsible for its establishment. In Ottoman calligraphy, 'classic' simply referred to any work that was done in imitation of Şeyh Hamdullah's style. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that until the late seventeenth century, among Ottoman calligraphers the best calligraphic works were regarded to be those that best imitated the manner of Şeyh Hamdullah.

It was Ahmed III's calligraphy master, Hāfız Osman, who '...streamlined the 'classical' *naskh* of Şeyh Hamdullah, to create his own style by refining the letter shapes, smoothing out the strokes, reducing the number of swooping tales and sub-linear flourishes, and opening up the space between letters and words, so that the

[631] Andrews, Walter C. – Kalpaklı, Mehmet (2005), p.85.

layout is more compact and regular'.[632] Here, the art of Hāfız Osman and his approach to calligraphy is particularly important in terms of understanding Ahmed III's departure from the 'classical' mode. The transition from traditional to innovative, through Hāfız Osman and then Ahmed III, represents the beginning of a period of wider experimentation which gave birth to what could be considered as almost 'modern' applications of calligraphy, including the Sultan's innovative signatures.

The main difference between the art of Hāfız Osman and Ahmed III iwa their method of signing their works. Hāfız Osman never created different designs for his signature while the Sultan did. Even in Hāfız Osman's 'innovative' enlarged *thuluth* compositions on album leaves and *hilye*-panels, he followed the traditional manner of signing his work in a horizontal line. The *jalī thuluth* album of Hāfız Osman, in the Topkapı Palace Museum collections (A. 3657), is a notable specimen in which the last page bears his classical signature (Fig.114).

Fig.114 Topkapı Palace Album, Last Page in *jalī thuluth* by Hāfız Osman, signed traditionally

Ahmed III aimed to transform the classical signature phrases into a sophisticated presentation of both functional and aesthetic value. In his *jalī thuluth* album leaves and panels, the Sultan felt the need to design individual signatures which would resemble a painter's signature and display its own, individual aesthetic values based on the 'plastic' flexibility of the *thuluth* script. This matter will be discussed further below by comparing the common values represented by local framed calligraphy with European framed paintings.

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[632] Blair, (2006), p.483

Ahmed III signed his works in multiple ways by using different signature phrases in different formats. In some cases, he used the 'classical' *katabahu* phrase like an ordinary calligrapher. However, it is interesting to see that even if the signature phrase was classical, its form and composition was innovative. For instance, the Sultan preferred to present the phrase '*katabahu Ahmad Hān'* (Ahmed Khan wrote it) in a pear-shaped form, he never placed it under the work in a horizontal line as his predecessors did.

The Sultan never referred to himself as *al-'abd al-faqīr* (the poor slave) or by other similar epithets commonly used by scribes and calligraphers; this could be related to his royal identity. However, it could also be argued that the Sultan may have wished to imitate the legandery Abbasid calligrapher Yaqut al-Mustasimi, who never called himself *al-'abd al-faqīr* (the poor slave) when signing.[633] This fact could be interpreted as a sign of Yāqūt al-Musta'simī's self confidence and pride.

Ahmed also used a 'sultanic' signature in the form of a *tughra,* something unique to his art and which was not used by any of his calligrapher-successors. The introduction of these innovative signatures, in particular the pear-shaped one, must be intricately related to the nature of calligraphic framed panels. Unlike manuscripts and album leaves, these panels were produced specifically to be placed on a wall, because of which they shared a common purpose with framed European paintings. Therefore, one could suggest that such a new way of presenting calligraphy required a new type of signature. In other words, the Sultan's decision to sign his framed *jalī thuluth* panels with innovative signatures must have been inspired by the signing of framed European painting. In this case, the relationship forged between the Sultan and the Ottoman elite with European painters, particularly Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, must have been exceptionally fruitful.

As earlier discussed, it was Mustafa II, Ahmed III's brother, who produced some of the earliest framed calligraphic panels. However his signature, which consisted of a few straight lines, was placed within a square frame and remained 'classical'. It could, also be possible, therefore, that Ahmed III's willingness to introduce new and

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[633] Ben-Azzouna, (2009), p.114

different signature styles could have been linked to a hidden competition between him and his brother.

Ahmed III designed signatures in 'minor' *thuluth,* which served to not only identify his hand as that behind the work, like a painter's signature, but at the same time would make it stand out as if were a second composition beneath the main text. Before analysing these signatures it is important to mention that their diverse variety is closely linked to the ability of *thuluth* script to allow multiple different compositional possibilities of a phrase.[634]

The signatures of the Sultan will now be listed in order to give an indication about their variety. As mentioned above, in many cases Ahmed III, like the sultan-calligraphers before him, signed his works using the traditional phrase of *katabahu*like an ordinary calligrapher. This may have been done due to a sincere wish to be regarded as a simple calligrapher. However, he also used the phrase; '*Ahmed bin Mehemmed Hān*' (Ahmed son of Mehemmed *Hān*), which indicated his royal identity. Additionally, he presented his signature in the phrase: *namaqahu Aḥmed bin Meḥemmed Ḫan al-muẓaffer dāiman*-(Ahmed, son of Mehemmed, the always victorious, penned it) in the form of a *Tughra*. He used the Persian phrase of *Eser-i Ḥāme-i* (the work of the reed pen of...): *Eser-i Ḥāme-i Shāh Ahmed b. Mehemmed Hān* (Work of the reed pen of Shah Ahmed, son of Mehemmed Khan) as well. In one instance, he used the sultanic title of 'servant of the two holy precincts' in his *Tughra* album (TSML: 3653): *Katabahu Ahmed Hān Ḫādim al-Haramayn al-Sharīfayn* (Sultan Ahmed, servant of the two holy precincts, wrote it). Finally, he used rhyming couplets written in Turkish, which were written in *naskh* and placed to the lower right and left sides of the composition. It is notable that his signature made use of phrases in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, but in all instances the Turkic royal title of '*Hān'* was preserved.

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[634] Different compositions in various calligraphic styles came to light only in the second half of the nineteenth century. Therefore, the signatures of Ahmed III must be regarded as the 'prototypes' of the compact compositions of the nineteenth century. The forms of the letters in other styles, in particular the styles of *ta'liq* and *riq'a*, are not suitable for such compact compositions.

These signatures, which are vital in allowing for the attribution of calligraphic works to Ahmed III, will be studied according to their form and text, as 'pear-shaped signatures', '*tughra*-signatures' and 'couplet signatures'.

VI.2.1.The Pear-shaped Signatures

The first of Ahmed III's pear-shaped signature is an aesthetically pleasing, compact composition in *thuluth* style in the shape of a pear that reads: 'احمد بن محمد خان/Ahmed bin Mehemmed *Hān*' (Ahmed son of Mehemmed *Hān*) (Fig.115). This pear-shaped signature was invented by the Sultan and its form was admired by most late eighteenth and nineteenth century calligraphers. Ahmed III, mostly concentrating on the production of *jalī thuluth* panels, must have simultaneously decided to work on new designs for his signature by making use of the curled cursive nature of the *thuluth* script.

Fig.115 The first pear-shaped signature of Ahmed III in ink: ***Ahmed b. Mehemmed Hān***

In addition to the first pear-shaped signature, the Sultan composed a second one which he employed on the mirrored *jalī thuluth basmala*, now in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts (Env. No: 2724). This signature reads, كتبه احمد خان /'*katabahu* Aḥmed *Hān*' (Ahmed *Hān* wrote it) (Fig.116), differentiating the content from the first, in which Ahmed III named his father. Since the mirrored *jalī thuluth basmalah* is undated, it is difficult to know whether it was invented before or after the first pear-shaped signature.

Fig.116 The second pear-shaped signature of Ahmed III: *Katabahu Ahmed Hān*

Sultan Ahmed used the first pear-shaped signature on his mother's public fountain in Üsküdar, built in 1728, and his public fountain in front of the Topkapı Palace's main gate, built in 1729; the signature was placed to the lower left of the *jalī thuluth* couplets employed on these public works. In addition, the first pear-shaped signature occurs on almost all of his framed *jalī thuluth* calligraphic panels, with the exception of the above-mentioned mirrored *jalī thuluth basmalah* panel and some *tughra* panels which were signed with his couplet-signature.

There are also some *tughra*-style compositions which bear the Sultan's first pear-shaped signature. These are in the Topkapı Palace: the two *tughra*-shaped compositions positioned to the right and left of the entrance to the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, and the two *tughra* panels on the east wall of the Scribe's Hall in the Imperial Council Rooms.

Fig.117 The first pear-shaped signature of Ahmed III: *Ahmed bin Mehemmed Hān*

An important feature of Ahmed III's pear-shaped signatures is a result of the technicalities inherent in their design, particularly in the first. Here, the last letter of the final word, the ں /'noūn' (n) of '*Hān*', is placed in an inverted position (Fig.117). Before Ahmed III, such an inversion of individual letters in a calligraphic composition is unknown.

It can clearly be observed in these signatures that the Sultan was aiming to transform his signature phrases into the shape of a pear, for the letter 'noūn' has been used as a capping element, completing the per form. The 'noūn', which would come to be replaced with other letters converted into a 'covering curve', is of significance for understanding the later designs of pear-shaped signatures in the nineteenth century calligraphers, particularly those of Mustafa Rākım (d. 1826), the calligraphy teacher of Sultan Mahmud II.

Almost all the celebrated calligraphers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries used similar elements, placing a covering 'curve letter' at the top of their signature. It can be argued, therefore, that the idea of distorting a letter in order to use it as a capping element in a compact composition, and the introduction of this idea to Islamic calligraphy, was due to Ahmed III and his pear-shaped signatures. It is also important to emphasize the multiple aspects of the pear-shaped signature which, in addition to its functional duty, is that it is artistically an outstanding, individual composition. In realising this, the signature gains the status of being a second composition apart from the main text. This makes these innovative signatures a notable aspect of Ahmed III's art.

Pear-shaped calligraphic designs in *thuluth* stretch back to the fourteenth century and the earliest known example is the *Quranic* rosette located above the portal of the Artukid Madrasa of Zinciriye in Mardin, built in 1385.[635] The earliest pear-shaped designs in calligraphic albums however, are associated with Timurid calligraphers. The pear-shaped dedication medallion on the scroll of Sultan Mehmed II (TKSK-E.H. 2878), preserved in the imperial treasury of the Topkapı Palace, is an outstanding example (Fig.118). The Sultan must have viewed this scroll during his visits to the treasury and might have been inspired by it while designing his pear-shaped signature.

[635] Özcan, (2009), p.211

Fig.118 The Pear-shaped Dedication Medallion from the Scroll of Sultan Mehmed II (TSML E.H. 2878)

The innovative signatures introduced by the Sultan, particularly the pear-shaped ones, could also be related to individual signatures of contemporary illuminators, such as Abdülcelīl Levnī Çelebi[636] (d.1732) and Ali Üsküdārī (d.1735). Unlike calligraphers, illuminators used to sign their works independently, placing their name within a frame.

Fig.119 The Signature of Abdülcelīl Levnī Çelebi, the chief-painter of the court

The signature of Levnī Chelebi, the chief-painter of the Ottoman court, is important because of its resemblance to the Sultan's pear-shaped signatures in its composition, from the lower right to the upper left side (Fig.119). However, unlike the contemporary illuminators of the period, Levnī preferred to sign solely his name without using any of the above-mentioned signature phrases.

In addition to individual signatures of contemporary illuminators, there are some seventeenth century epigraphic inscriptions that may have provided inspiration for the Sultan. For example, the round calligraphic composition at the end of the monumental *jalī thuluth* inscription reading, حافظواعلى الصلوت اوالصلوةالوسطى وقوموالله قنتين (The *Qur'an*, *Sūrah* II, 238), 'Take care to do your prayers, praying in the best way and stand before God in devotion', above the main portal of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque (Fig. 120) could well be regarded as a prototype.

[636] Artan, (2006), p.430

Fig.120 The *jalī thuluth* formula above the main portal of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque

Fig.121 The round calligraphic composition at the end of the portal inscription of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque

The round calligraphic composition, consisting of the final phrase of the above verse was the work of Kāsım Gubārī (d.1615), who was responsible for the calligraphic inscriptions of the mosque (Fig. 121).[637]

A last possible source of inspiration could be the *tughra*. In his pear-shaped signatures, Ahmed III stacked the words of the signature phrase in an almost triangular composition, similar to the lower portion of the *tughra*.[638] It is very likely that the *tughra* inspired the Sultan, for it was a form much loved by him , as is evident in his transformation of it into a format for compositing numerous '*tughra*-shaped' compositions.

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[637] Ayvansarayi, (2001), p.58 In the history of Ottoman calligraphy, such calligraphic roundels go back to the mid-fifteenth century. In the sixteenth century, Mamluk inspired calligraphic roundels, gathering the finials of the vertical letters in the center of the composition, were in demand. Such compositions were applied on the transitional zones of the domes of mosques and occasionally on tiles. However, the round calligraphic composition by Qāsim al-Ghubārī in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque is different from the Mamluk inspired 'classical' roundels. In this case, the order of the letters is from the lower right to the upper left side and the finials of the vertical letters are not gathered in the center.

[638] Sheila Blair, in her *Islamic Calligraphy*, outlines the resemblance between stylized calligrapher's signatures of early nineteenth century Ottoman calligraphers, particularly Mustafa Rakım (d.1826), and the *Tughra*. She considers the *Tughra* to be the primary source of influence for the stylized signature of Rakım (2007, p.502). However, she does not mention the ingenious calligrapher who devised numerous stylized signatures almost a century before Mustafa Rakım: Sultan Ahmed III.

VI.2.2. 'Tughra-shaped Signatures' of Ahmed III:

As the historical background and calligraphic peculiarities of the *tughra* have been discussed earlier in this research, before defining the Sultan's *tughra*-shaped signatures it is important to highlight the functional difference between a *tughra* and a '*tughra*-shaped signature'.

A *tughra* is the stylised calligraphic representation of the name and titles of rulers and princes; according to Blair, it is 'the sultan's personal emblem'.[639] At the same time, it is the monogram, the seal, and the signature of the sultan. As the classical *firman* phrase, 'it is the noble sign to be trusted,' indicates, the *tughra* is the primary sign of the Ottoman dynasty. The *tughra* was to be trusted because it was placed on official documents in order to confirm their legality. An Ottoman *tughra* consists of: the name of the ruler, his father's name, and the phrase 'the always victorious'.

The term '*tughra*-shaped signature' indicates different signature phrases composed in the shape of a *tughra*, which were both designed and utilised by Ahmed III. Therefore, it should be clearly stated that the similarities between a *tughra* and a *tughra*-shaped signature is only in their form and not their content. Their text, meaning and function are completely different.

Ahmed III was an expert designer and executor of all types of compositions in the *tughra* format;his creativity in this form was unparalleled. In addition to his easy to read, legible signatures, the Sultan wished to create a special signature that would also display his skills in designing *tughra*s. It seems clear that it was the Sultan's royal identity which enabled him to design new signatures in the form of the imperial monogram.

Many Ottoman sultans worked on, or at least 'took care' of, the designs of their *tughra*s. For example, the sketchbook of Sultan Mehmed II (TKS.H.2324), in the Topkapı Palace Museum, includes four sketched *tughra* by Mehmed, two complete and two half-finished.[640] The difference in Ahmed III's approach to these, for example, is in his interest in making use of the form of the imperial monogram. As will be discussed separately, Ahmed also created an album (TSMK A.3653)

[639] Blair, (2006), p.476
[640] London, *Turks Exhibition* (2005), p.435

consisting of ten different *Tughra*s, including his official *tughra*, *tughra*-shaped compositions and *tughra*-shaped signatures. Ahmed III used the latter for signing his *jalī thuluth* '*tevhīd* formula' above the entrance of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet and in the royal *tughra* album.

The *tughra*-shaped signature on the *jalī thuluth tevhīd* panel above the entrance to the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet reads; نمقه احمد بن محمد خان المظفردائما/- *namaqahu Aḥmed bin Meḥemmed Ḫān al-muẓaffer dāiman*-[Ahmed, son of Mehemmed Khan, the always victorious, penned it] (Figs. 122, 123). Just under the *tughra*-shaped signature is the date 1138 A.H. (1725 A.D.).

Fig.122 The *Tughra*-shaped signature of Ahmed III within the *Jalī Thuluth Tawhīd* panel above the Entrance to the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet

Fig.123 The *Jalī Thuluth Tawhīd* panel above the Entrance to the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, with the *Tughra*-shaped signature to the bottom left.

The Sultan, by placing the *tevhīd* formula above this particular entrance, must have felt it necessary to use a special, symbolic signature. The reason for the use of a *Tughra*-shaped signature is related to its location; its placement above the Mantle Hall entrance sends a message to the viewer about not only the Sultan's loyalty and devotion to the Prophet's personal belongings but also Ahmed's desire to make the

public aware of these traits. The identity of the Sultan as Caliph stands out in the *tughra*-shaped signature below the *tevhīd* formulation. By applying the declaration of Islamic faith above the entrance of this sacred space, the Sultan was glorifying not only himself but also the Ottoman household. The multiple aspects of this signature is evident I the fact that this was both a calligrapher's signature, beginning with the signature phrase '*namaqahu...*', and the signature of the Sultan composed in the form of a *tughra*.

What is interesting is that the Sultan did not use his official *tughra* to sign the *tevhīd* formula. Instead of placing his official *tughra*, reading 'Ahmed b. Mehemmed al-muẓ affer dāiman,' he designed a special signature in the form of a *tughra* that instead read '*namaqahu Ahmed bin Mehemmed Hān al-muẓ affer daiman* (Ahmed, son of Mehemmed, the always victorious, penned it).' In designing a signature in the form of the *tughra*, instead of using a version of the pear-shaped signature, Ahmed indicated his willingness to stress his sultanic identity.

Using a signature in the form of a *tughra* is unique to Ahmed III; there is no other calligrapher known to us who created a signature in the form of the imperial monogram. To reiterate, it was Ahmed III who, for the first time, used poetical texts to create individual *tughra*-shaped compositions, already discussed in the previous chapter.

In addition to the 1138 A.H. (1725 A.D.) *tughra*-shaped signature discussed above, there are two others designed and signed by the Sultan in the last two pages of the Royal *Tughra* Album (TSMK.A3653). This royal album, dated 1140 A.H. (1727 A.D.) and discussed earlier in this thesis, was, according to Ugur Derman, the masterpiece of Ahmed III.[641] The two *Tughra*-shaped signatures at the end of this royal album are both of the Sultan and are the final two *Tughra*-shaped compositions of the album (Fig.124, 125).

[641] Derman (2007), p.1

Fig.124 The Nineth *Tughra*-shaped Composition of the Royal Album: *Tughra*-shaped Signature (a)

The first *Tughra*-shaped signature, the ninth composition in the album, reads:

Eser-i Hāme-i Shāh Ahmed b. Mehemmed Hān

اثرخامه شاه احمد بن محمد خان

(The work of the reed pen of Sultan Ahmed, son of Sultan Mehemmed)

Fig.125 The Tenth and the Last *Tughra*-style Composition of the Royal Album: *Tughra*-shaped Signature (b)

While the second *Tughra*-shaped signature, the tenth and final composition in the album, reads:

Katabahu Aḥmed Khān Khādim al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn

کتبه احمد خادم الخرمین الشرفین

(Sultan Ahmed Han, servant of the two holy precincts, wrote it).

In the first *tughra*-signature of the album, as noted by Uğur Derman, Sultan Ahmed signed his work as a professional calligrapher in stating that his composition was the work of his pen. In the second *tughra*-shaped signature he declares himself a servant of the holy precincts of Mecca and Medina.[642] 'The servant of the holy precincts of Mecca and Medina' is a well-known honorific title, frequently used by Muslim rulers to stress their loyalty to the holy cities.

The use of two signatures in a single work instead of one is an interesting phenomenon as traditionally, calligrapher's signed their works only once. A manuscript was signed twice only rarely, and in those instances it appears to have been as a way of confirming the correct spelling of the calligrapher's name.[643] Some calligraphic exercises by nineteenth century Ottoman calligraphers were also signed more than once, but the purpose of this was to improve their signature skills and therefore was solely practical. The use of two *tughra*-shaped signatures in Ahmed III's *tughra* Album was related to his desire to stress his identity by combining the form of the Ottoman *tughra* with two phrases in different languages (Arabic and Persian), thus indicating his superiority over other Muslim rulers. There are other examples among works of Muslim calligrapher-rulers who used this same method to emphasize their superiority. One example is an illuminated calligraphic panel copied by Fath Ali Shah Qajar (r.1797-1834). This work, sold at Sotheby's, London, on 9 April 2008, is signed twice by the Shah (Fig.126). Apart from the two signatures reading *mashshaqahu Fath Ali Shah Qajar* (Fath Ali Shah Qajar exercised it), there are five lines in *nas-ta'liq* script which read "*natīja-e qalam-e shāh-e rozeghār-ast īn"* (This is the result of the pen of the king of the world).

[642] Derman (2008), p.5
[643] Ibid, p.311

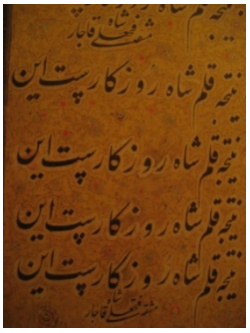

Fig.126 Calligraphic panel, copied and signed twice by Fath Ali Shah Qajar (1797-1834) (26x19cm)

Another interesting aspect of Ahmed's two *tughra*-shaped signatures in his album is the fact that his pear-shaped signatures were placed to the lower left of the *tughra*-signatures. Actually, all the *tughra*-style compositions in the album are signed. In the instances of the *tughra* signatures, at the first glance one hardly realizes the originality of the two signature types. By signing the last two *tughra*-style compositions, which are at the same time *tughra*-shaped signatures, Ahmed III introduced a unique element to the art of Islamic calligraphy: 'signing a signature'. To my knowledge, there are no other Ottoman calligraphers who created a signature as an individual, signed composition.

VI.2.3. 'Couplet' Signatures of Ahmed III

Ahmed III signed his *Tughra*-panels with what I term 'couplet signatures,' a couplet divided into two lines of text, one each located to the lower left and right of the composition.[644] The couplet-signature, composed by the poet-Sultan himself, is usually related to the content of the calligraphic composition. Ali Emīrī Efendi (d.1924), the famous bibliophile scholar of the late nineteenth century and the copier of the *Dīwān* of Ahmed III, has gathered some of these couplets and mentioned their use as signatures.

[644] Professor Uğur Derman has called these "poetic signatures". See; Derman, (1970), p.731

To my knowledge, it is in calligraphic works by Ahmed III that couplet-signatures first appear. Why did the Sultan use these couplets to sign his calligraphic panels? What was his source of inspiration? One possible reason can be related to the tradition of signing *firmans*, in which the *tughra* was always placed above inscriptions in numerous lines of *dīwānī* script. Therefore, it can be suggested that the *firman* could have visually influenced the Sultan to place lines of text to both the lower right and left sides of his *tughra* compositions.

A second explanation for the use of couplet-signatures, particularly on *tughra*-panels, is the 'album tradition.' in which *tughra*s were signed in single lines and positioned below the main composition. An album leaf bearing the *tughra* of Ahmed I (r.1603-17), signed by 'Kalender' (TKS.A.4301), is an important specimen that supports this explanation (Fig.127).[645]

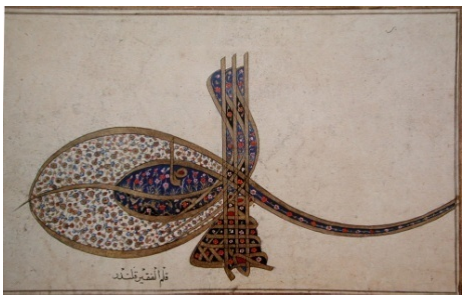

Fig.127 The *Tughra* of Ahmed I (r.1603-17) on an Album Leaf, Signed 'Kalender' (TSML, No.4301)

An illuminated *tughra* of Sultan Murād III (Topkapı Palace Library No.4301), bears a couplet in gold in praise of the *tughra* (Fig.128). This calligraphic specimen indicates that 'praising' couplets were used on individual *tughra*s in the sixteenth century. Ahmed III, who tried to revitalise the courtly arts, as exemplified by his establishment of the Tekfursaray ateliers to re-popularise Iznik tiles, must have appreciated the idea of referencing the sixteenth century practice of applying couplets to calligraphic works in his own panels.

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[645] Tülay Artan pointed out a similar illuminated *Tughra* of Ahmed I signed by Nakkaş Hasan Paşa. [Artan, (2006), p.412]

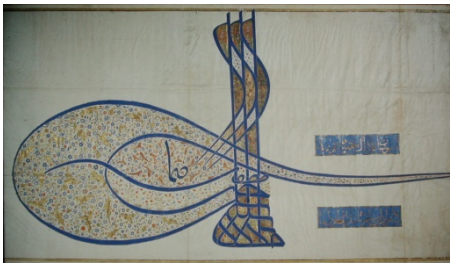

Fig.128 The *Tughra* of Sultan Murad III (TSML A.4301)

Professor Derman, in an article on calligraphic panels bearing the names of leading Sufi figures, argued that signatures consisting of single poetic lines began to be used in the early nineteenth century.[646] I believe that instead, both in the second half of the eighteenth century and from the nineteenth century onwards, the use of poetic signatures consisting of either a single line or a couplet were actually influenced by calligraphers mimicking the couplet signatures of Ahmed III.

The undated *tughra*-panel by Ahmed III in the Topkapi Palace (TSML GY.1560) in İstanbul, bearing the *tughra* of Ahmed III himself, is one of the few examples of the official *tughra* signed with a couplet-signature (Fig.129), which reads;

Ser-i zülfesi revnāk-şiken-i zülf-i bütān / Garrā eser-i hāme-i sultān-ı cihān

سر زلفه سی رونقشکن زلف بتان - غرا اثر خامه سلطان جهان

(End of its hair leaves the beauty of the hair of idols in shadow / Brilliant work of the reed pen of the sultan of the world).

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[646] "Osmanlı Hat Sanatında Tarikat Pirleri", *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf ve Sufiler: Kaynaklar-Doktrin-Ayin- ve Erkan-Tarikatlar-Edebiyat-Mimari-İkonografi-Modernizm* / haz. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2005. s.501-504

Fig.129 The *Tughra* of Ahmed III, by Ahmed III, with a couplet signature, 46x31cm. TSML GY 1560

In this couplet, it was not necessary to mention the name of the Sultan as it was already present in the text of the *tughra* itself.

Another example of Ahmed III's calligraphic panels bearing a couplet-signature is 'the *Hadith-tughra*-panel', studied in detail in the previous chapter (Fig.130). As mentioned earlier, the text of the *tughra*-shaped composition is the hadith شفاعتي لاهل الكبائرمن امتي /*Shafāatī li ahl al-Qabāiri min ummatī* ('On the day of judgment, I will be with the great sinners of my community'). The couplet-signature on this panel has been divided into two lines, again positioned to the lower left and right sections of the composition. The signature-couplet reads:

Şefî'ül Müznibînsin şeh-i iklîm-i mâ edhâ/ Hadîs-i pâkini Sultan Ahmed eylemiş tuğra

شفيع المذنبينسن شه اقليم ما ادخا - حديث پاكنى سلطان احمد ايلدى طغرا

(You are the intercessor for sinners on the day of judgment... You, the king of the country of excellence – Sultan Ahmed transformed your pure *hadith* into a *tughra*).

As already discussed, Mehmed Süreyyā Bey states that this *tughra*-shaped panel was originally displayed in the Mausoleum of Abā Eyyūb al-Ansārī, in the region of

Eyüp, İstanbul.[647] It is likely that this panel was given to the mausoleum as a royal gift following the construction of two new minarets in 1723 at the order of the Sultan.[648] Mehmed Süreyyā Bey notes that 'one of the *tughra*s of Ahmed III, kept in the mausoleum of Abā Eyyūb al-Ansārī, was signed with the couplet: '*Şefî'ül Müznibînsin şeh-i iklîm-i mâ edhâ/ Hadîs-i pâkini Sultan Ahmed eylemiş tuğra*'.[649] His use of the phrase '...one of the *tughra*s of Ahmed III...' indicates that multiple *tughra* panels created by the Sultan were located in the mausoleum. Additionally, the couplet-signature mentioned by Mehmed Süreyyā Bey is identical to that on the hadith *tughra* panel in the Topkapı Palace Library (TKSL.GY 947). It can therefore be suggested that this latter *hadith-tughra* panel in the Topkapı Palace Library may also have been brought to the Palace from the mausoleum of Abā Eyyūb al-Ansārī.

Fig.130 The *Hadith-Tughra* by Ahmed III (TSML GY 947)

In the Ali Emīrī Effendi copy of the *Dīwān* of Ahmed III, the use of the couplet-signature in Figure 122 was remarked upon.[650] The expression that Emīrī used to describe the Sultan's signature is remarkable: '*... hadīs-i şerīfi zīrine ketebe makāmında tektīb buyurmuşlardır*' (... the couplet was inscribed by the Sultan, as a signature, under the exalted *hadith*).[651] In his copy of the *Dīwān* of Ahmed III, Ali Emīrī Effendi composed a poem in praise of the *hadith-tughra* using a literary form called a '*tasdis*', which added a stanza to a couplet.[652] The repeated couplet in this

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[647] Mehmed Süreyya, (2004), Vol: III, p.10
[648] Ayvansarayī, (2001), p.333
[649] Mehmed Süreyya, (2004), Vol: III, p.11
[650] *Dīwān*, (Millet Manuscript Library - Istanbul: Ali Emīrī Section, Manzum, No:529), p.11

[651] Ibid, p.12
[652] Ibid, p.76 – Ali Emīrī Efendi's note reads, "S*ultan-i mağfūr-i müşarünileyh ... hazretlerinin şefāatī li ehli'l kebāiri min ümmetī hadīs-i şerīfini rağbet-şiken-i hatt-i Yākūt ve 'İmād olacak mertebede hārika-i mahāret ve letāfeti hāiz olmak üzere kalem-i mu'ciz rakam-i şāhāneleriyle tuğra-i garrā*

poem is the same as that on the *Hadith-tughra* panel: You are the intercessor for sinners on the day of judgment... You, the king of the country of excellence – Sultan Ahmed transformed your pure *hadith* into a *tughra*.

Another *tughra*-shaped composition, kept in the Topkapı Palace Library (TSML.GY.425), was also signed by the sultan with a couplet signature (Figs.131, 132, 133).

Fig.131 Ahmed III's *Hadith-Tughra*, (TSML GY.425)

Unlike the first specimen discussed, TSML GY.1560, this *tughra*-panel has been dated to 1122 A.H./1710 A.D.

Fig. 132 First Line of the Couplet

The first line of the couplet, located to the lower right of the *tughra*, reads;

اعلام ایچون اخلاصینی خان احمد یکتا

İ'lām içün ihlāsını Hān Ahmed-i yektā

şeklinde tahrīr buyurdukları levha-i yektā-i ziynet-itilās bir mahall-i mübārekde manzūr-i fakīr olarak ziyāretiyle müşerref olunmuş ve ketebe mevkiinde kezālik hatt-ı dest-i mülūkāneleriyle işbū beyt-i tahiyyāt-āyātın tektīb buyurulduğu g örülmüş olmağla ālibde pertev-efza ve manzūme-i belāgat ve mārifete şehbeyt-i yektā olan matla'-i bedi'-i feyyāzānelerinin tesdīsi"

(As a declaration of his sincerity, Khān Ahmed, the matchless)

Fig. 133 Second Line of the Couplet

And the second line of the couplet, located to the lower left, reads;

كفتارينى ىشاه رسلك ايلدى طغرا

Güftārını şāh-i rüsülün eyledi tuğrā 1122 - (A.H.)

(Made a *tughra* out of a saying of the king of prophets - 1710 A.D.)

According to a record in his *Dīwān,* we know that Sultan Ahmed III also used other couplet signatures. A further note relays that one of these was on a panel which was also presented as a royal gift reads, '*yādigār-ı şāhāneleri olan bir levha-i yektā zīrine tahrīr buyurmuşlardır*' (...it was inscribed by the sultan below a panel which was one of his most exalted gifts).[653] The couplet reads;

ا ولدى اشبو مصراعى نعت جليل ومعتبر

'Oldu işbū mısra'ı na't-ı celīl u mu'teber

(This exalted line in praise of the Prophet is)

كلك سلطان احمد ابن خان محمد دن اثر

Kilk-i Sultān Ahmed ibn-i Hān Mehmed'den eser'

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[653] *Dīwān*, (Millet Manuscript Library - Istanbul: Ali Emīrī Section, Manzum, No:529), p.23

(the work of the reed pen of Sultan Ahmed, son of Khan Mehmed)

Following this new signature method established by Ahmed III, similar examples of couplet-signatures were continuously produced by official scribes until the end of the eighteenth century. Among these works, a marble panel bearing the *tughra* of Abdülhamīd I is notable. Its couplet-signature indicates that it was inscribed by a high ranking official, Silahdar Mir Mehmed Emin, in 1188 A.H. (1774 A.D.) (Fig.134).[654] As in the couplet-signatures of Ahmed III, the first line of the couplet has been positioned to the lower right and the second line to the lower left of the *tughra*.

Fig. 134 The *Tughra* of Abdulhamīd I (r.1774-89), carved on marble, signed with a couple-signature by Silahdār Mīr Mehmed Emīn, dated 1188AH/1774AD, Topkapı Palace

VI.2.4. Literary Evidence: Poems in praise of the couplet-signatures of Ahmed III

As has been mentioned earlier, Ali Emīrī Efendi composed poems in praise of Ahmed III's calligraphic works. For instance, he composed a poem praising the the first composition in the Royal *Tughra* Album: '*Hazret-i Sultan-ı Kab-ı Kavseyn ve'l Haremeyn* (His excellency, Sultan of the distance of two bow-lengths (*al-Najm* 53:9) and the two Holy Precincts)'.[655] Ali Emīrī composed a poem in praise of this work and has used its couplet-signature after every stanza (Appendix 3.6.1). Emīrī Efendi

[654] The couplet reads, 'Feyz-cūyende-i Feyyāz-i Kerīm-i Mübīn – Eser-i hāme-i Silahdār Mīr Mehemmed Emīn'.
[655] Ibid, p.98-101

also composed poems in praise of the Sultan's couplet signatures. As has been seen above, one such example utilises the literary form of '*tasdīs'*(Appendix 3.6.2).[656]

These poems portray Ali Emīrī Efendi's regard for the calligraphic works of the Sultan. In addition, by using the couplet-signature of Sultan Ahmed after each of his own stanzas, he clearly unified his poem with the Sultan's.[657] Eulogies in praise of calligraphic works are rarely found in relation to Ottoman poetry. Therefore, in these poems of Ali Emīrī Efendi the art of Sultan Ahmed III is given an exceptional level of respect not only in art history, but also literature.

VI.3. Signatures in Three Different Languages: Tughras in Arabic, Persian and Turkish

Touched upon briefly above, another original and noteworthy aspect of Ahmed III's new signatures is the variety of languages employed. In addition to the classical Arabic '*katabahu*' and '*namaqahu'* phrases, the Sultan used signature phrases/couplets in both Persian and Turkish. As for his signatures in these latter two languages, the Sultan may have been influenced by Hāfız Osman Efendi, who also signed some of his works in Persian and Turkish.[658] At this time, the signatures of the Sultan will be grouped together by the language they were written in. The usage of certain signature phrases in a particular language, and the signature style they were created in, will be surveyed.

VI.3.1. Signatures in Arabic: 'Katabahu' and 'Namaqahu':

The sultan used the Arabic *katabahu* phrase twice, each in different forms. As mentioned above, one of his two pear-shaped signatures begins with the Arabic '*katabahu*' phrase. The second example is one of the *tughra*-shaped signatures (the tenth *tughra*-shaped composition in the Royal *Tughra* Album), which reads:

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[656] *Dīwān*, Millet Manuscript Library, Ali Emīrī Section, Manzum, No 529, p. 76

[657] In literary tradition, forms like *tasdīs* indicate the poet's appreciation regarding a poem and his willingness to compose a new poem which would include couplets from the selected poem.

[658] Dere, (2001), p.32

Katabahu Aḥmed Khān Khādim al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharafayn كتبه احمد خادم الخرمين الشرفين (Sultan Ahmed, servant of the two holy precincts, wrote it).

The phrase beginning with '*namaqahu*' was employed on the *tughra*-shaped signature of the *jalī thuluth tevhīd* formula above the entrance to the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet: نمقه احمد بن محمد خان المظفردائما /*-namaqahu Aḥmed bin Meḥemmed Ḫan al-muẓaffer daiman*-(Ahmed, son of Mehemmed Khan, the always victorious, penned it).

VI.3.2. Singatures in Persian: 'Eser-i Hāme-i'

The first of the *Tughra*-shaped signatures, which is to say theninth *tughra*-shaped composition in the royal album, reads: اثرخامه شاه احمد بن محمد خان */Eser-i Hame-i Shah Ahmed b. Mehemmed Khān*

(The work of the reed pen of Shāh Ahmed, son of Meḥ emmed Khān).

Unlike the rest of the signature phrases used by Ahmed III, in this case the royal title of 'Sultan' has been replaced with that of 'Shāh'. This is due to the use of Persian for the script, and was also reflective of the historical eagerness of the Ottoman sultans' in wishing to be addressed so. It will be remembered that in the *tughra*s of immediate Ahmed III's predecessors, Selīm I, Süleyman I, Selīm II, Murād III) and Mehmed III the title of 'shāh' was retained.

VI.3.3. Signatures in Turkish: Couplets

The two examples of couplet-signatures created by Ahmed III were both written in Turkish. It will be remembered that the first was found on the *tughra* panel of Ahmed III in the collection of Neslishah Osmanoglu, signed as follows, 'End of its hair leaves the beauty of the hair of idols in shadow / Brilliant work of the reed pen of the sultan of the world.' The second of these is on the hadith *Tughra* in the Topkapı Palace Library (A. 831), 'You are the intercessor for sinners on the day of judgment... You, the king of the land of excellence – Sultan Ahmed transformed your pure *hadith* into a *tughra*.'

It can therefore be seen that as a progressive ruler, Ahmed III not only introduced novel political and economical ideas to the Ottoman court, but as a calligrapher also created and presented modern applications in the art of calligraphy. One could easily suggest that it is extremely rare to find a calligrapher like Ahmed III not only in the eighteenth century, but in the entire history of Ottoman calligraphy. No other calligrapher created and employed such a rich repertoire of signatures. The influence of these innovative signatures on calligraphers in the second half of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, needs to be discussed separately.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Legacy of Sultan Ahmed III as a Calligrapher

Chapter Seven: The Legacy of Sultan Ahmed III as a Calligrapher

Sultan Ahmed III's career as a prolific calligrapher hugely influenced later artistic programmes of calligraphers and patrons of calligraphy. With the scale and variety of his calligraphic works, the Sultan redefined the status of calligraphy among the courtly arts. His calligraphic works were so admired that some were identically copied by leading calligraphers as a sign of respect and to show their appreciation for Ahmed's calligraphic skill and mastery.

Ahmed III's artistic programme of deploying calligraphy as a tool of propaganda was continued by his successor calligrapher-sultans, including Mustafa III (r.1757-1774), Selīm III (r.1789-1807), Mahmud II (r.1808-1839), Abdülmecid (r.1839-61), Abdülaziz (r.1861-76), Abdülhamīd II (r.1876-1909), and Mehmed VI Vahidüddin (r.1918-22). I would like to suggest that this continuation was related to the steady increase of Western influence on eighteenth-century Ottoman art, and the resultant transformation of calligraphy into the ultimate statement of local Ottoman and Islamic identity. Possibly in memory of their ancestor, the calligrapher-sultans Mahmud II and Abdülmecid calligraphed particular texts which had previously been composed by Ahmed III. Two examples to support this statement are Mahmud II's *jalī thuluth* panel[659] (KC:CAL.312) bearing the following *hadith,* '*shafāatī li-ahl al-kabāir min ummatī*,' and the *jalī thuluth* '*fallāhu khayrun hāfiẓ an wa huwa arḥam al-rāḥimīn*' panel, (KC:CAL.448) of Sultan Abdülmecid (r.1839-1861), referring to Ahmed III's *jalī thuluth* panel (TSM 8/322) in the Topkapı Palace Museum.[660]

It is clear that by setting new standards for taste and by investigating new calligraphic formats, Ahmed III opened new paths in the art of composition. The roots of calligraphic innovations seen in some almost experimental works of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be found in the art of Ahmed III. Of these, it was his *tughra*-shaped compositions that can be seen to have constituted the biggest impact for after Ahmed III's reign, the status and function of the *tughra* changed immensely: it was transformed into a sign of legitimacy and became the Ottoman equivalent of a European coat of arms. Among his *tughra*-shaped compositions, the *Hadith-tughra* became very famous and was copied by many master calligraphers.

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[659] Safwat, (1996), p.159
[660] Ibid, p.161

The impact of Ahmed III's innovations on later calligraphers was widespread. Firstly, Ahmed III aimed to refine calligraphy by commissioning works important for their scientific aspects. Nineteenth-century sultans, following in his path, also published copies of 'albums of letter combinations' (*hurūfat mecmūası* tr.) by Hāfız Osman and Ismail Zühdī Efendi[661]. In commissioning these publications, the State aimed to disperse the canonical rules and golden proportions of certain calligraphic styles to a wider social body. Secondly, calligraphers who imitated the pear-shaped signatures of Ahmed III created a school of such signatures which gained widespread acceptance from the nineteenth century onwards. Until now, these innovations and their impact have not been subject to scholarly debate. Finally, some individual calligraphic compositions by Ahmed III became frequently imitated 'grand clichés' and are worthy of mention. Among these, identical copies of the Sultan's *thuluth āl-i rasūl* (Prophet's family) composition and the *jalī thuluth basmala* were created from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards. In particular, the *thuluth āl-i rasūl* composition deserves further scholarly research and analysis. Here I will be limited to discussing the significance and multiple -aspects of Ahmed's impact on later calligraphers with reference to their imitations and/or identical copies of his calligraphic works.

VII.1. The Impact of Ahmed III's Innovative Signatures

As seen in the previous chapter, the Sultan invented different types of signatures to sign his calligraphic works. Among these, pear-shaped signatures of the Sultan created a new fashion, particularly in the signing of calligraphic panels. Master Ottoman calligraphers of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries composed their own pear-shaped signatures after Ahmed III's prototype. To my present knowledge, the *tughra*-shaped signature of Ahmed III remained unique to him and the only known example of its application as a formal signature is on the *jalī thuluth tevhīd* composition above the entrance to the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet. The final of the Sultan's innovative signatures, the couplet-signature, he used to sign most of his

[661] Schick, (2000), p.459

tughra compositions, except those in the Imperial Album. Many of these couplets can be found in his *Dī wān*. Couplet-signatures were not in fashion for very long and their use declined quickly, particularly for signing *tughra* compositions, until the early nineteenth century.

VII.1.1. Pear-shaped Signatures

The pear-shaped signatures of Ahmed III were accepted and gained in status among contemporary master calligraphers as well as his calligrapher successors, Selīm III, Mahmud II, Abdülmecid, Abdülaziz, Abdülhamīd II and Mehmed VI Vahidüddin. In my estimation, is it the pear-shaped signatures of Ahmed III that are among his main contributions to the art of calligraphy.

The earliest extant application of the pear-shaped signature by an Ottoman sultan after Ahmed III is that of his grandson, Selīm III (Fig.135). This is an extremely interesting work due to the fact that the signature and *Quranic* text calligraphed by Selīm are created as a single composition, which is to say that the text is a part of the signature itself. By using the so-called *ghubārī* , dust script, *Sūrat al-Fath* has been penned within the contours of the *nasta'līq* pear-shaped signature that reads, *'Sultān Selī m bin Mustafa Hān'*.

Fig.135 The Pear-shaped Signature of Sultan Selīm III

The second sultan who followed in Ahmed III's wake and created a pear-shaped signature was his younger grandson, Sultan Mahmud II.[662] As is evident, Mahmud's is a very successful imitation of Ahmed III's prototype (Fig.136). However, I believe that it was not Mahmud II who designed this signature, but that is was his calligraphy teacher, Mustafa Rākım (d.1826), who created it according to Ahmed III's pear-shaped model. Uğur Derman has argued the case for Mustafa Rākım's enormous influence on Mahmud II, referencing his visible supervision on numerous calligraphic works of this sultan.[663] I would suggest that Mustafa Rākım was aware of the significance of Ahmed III's innovations in signatures. Rākım's own attempts at composing pear-shaped signatures and re-organizing the Ottoman *Tughra* are closely related to this awareness.[664]

It is evident, however, that Mahmud II's pear-shaped signature was not an identical copy of Ahmed III's. Ahmed III's short signature phrase was altered in that the text of Mahmud II's has been extended and the word- order changed. Mahmud II's signature reads, '*Katabahu Maḥmūd bin 'Abdülḥamīd Khān* (Mahmūd son of Abdülhamīd *Hān* wrote it).' The royal title *Hān* , which in Ahmed's signature was located before his name , was in Mahmud's signature placed after the name of his father, Abdülhamīd. It is obvious that the reason of this textual rearrangement was to provide a better composition by placing the short royal title '*Hān'* at the top of the composition.

Fig.136 Pear-shaped signature of Mahmud II (r.1808-1839) – *Katabahu Maḥmūd bin 'Abdülḥamīd Hān*

[662] For the calligraphic carrier of Mahmud II see; Derman, (1990), pp.37-47
[663] Derman, (2002), p.146
[664] It is unfortunate that Dr. Süleyman Berk, a celebrated authority on Mustafa Rākım, has overlooked Ahmed III's influence on Rākım's art. His book *Mustafa Rākım* is an important resource on Rākım's innovations in signatures and *tughra* design. I believe that a better understanding of Rākım's art can only be reached by analysing its connection to that of Ahmed III.

Imitating Mahmūd II, his son Sultan Abdülmecid also composed a pear-shaped signature and used it for signing many of his calligraphic works (Fig.137). Under the influence of his calligraphy master, Tāhir Celāleddī n, Abdülmecid's signature remained less complex and more simplistic than his father's. As this signature is different in style to Mahmud's, it is significant in terms of following the continued use and appreciation of Ahmed III's pear-shaped signature composition.

Fig.137 The Pear-shaped signature of Sultan Abdülmecid–*Katabahu Abdülmecid bin Mahmud Hān*

Sultan Abdülaziz continued the tradition of composing pear-shaped signatures and designed his own, rather unrefined version (Fig.138). The placement of the title '*Hān*' at the top of the signature is poorly done in comparison to the signatures of his father, Mahmūd II, and his brother, Abdülmecid. There can be no doubt that the calligraphic quality of this composition is average, and it therefore marks a decline in the production history of the pear-shaped signature.

Fig.138 The Pear-shaped signature of Sultan Abdülaziz– *Katabahu 'Abd al-'Aziz bin Ma ḥmūd Khān*

The last Ottoman sultan, Mehmed VI Vahīdeddī n, also composed some calligraphic works in *jalī thuluth* and signed them using his own pear-shaped signature (Fig.139). The lack of calligraphic finesse in his work, and the poor design quality of his pear-shaped signature, are at odds with the works and signatures of his calligrapher predecessors.

Fig.139 The Pear-shaped Signature of Sultan Mehmed VI Vahīdeddīn (r.1918-22)

Sultans Abdülaziz and Vahdeddin were not master calligraphers and it appears obvious that, in their eyes, the practise of calligraphy was merely an element that completed their sultanic image. Their common attempts to compose calligraphic works and sign them with pear-shaped signatures are, however, noteworthy. These attempts deepen our understanding of Ahmed III's influence on his calligrapher-successors.

The pear-shaped signature of Ahmed III was not only a signature format copied by his successors. A second aspect of this innovative signature's impact is related to its form and the technicalities of its design, in particular the inversion of the '*nūn*'(n), the last letter of the final word, in the first of Ahmed's pear-shaped signatures. The turning of the '*nūn*' upside down to utilise it as a capping element of the signature composition was important and informs our understanding of the compact signatures and other calligraphic compositions that were widely used in the nineteenth century.

Almost all celebrated calligraphers of the nineteenth century composed their compact, pear-shaped signatures, which sometimes even referred clearly to the technical qualities of Ahmed III's pear-shaped signatures. Ahmed III's role in the evolution of these 'compact' signatures and in the formation of the tradition of using more than one signature is crucial to understanding his impact on this art. The introduction of 'compact' calligraphic forms marked an obvious departure from classical formats. Although some calligraphers continued signing their calligraphic panels in the classical linear line of text, particularly from the nineteenth century onwards, most preferred signing their works with pear-shaped signatures.

After Ahmed created the pear-shaped signature, in due course it began to appear in different media, such as tiled wall panels. The pear-shaped signature seen on the calligraphic band running along the tiled walls of the Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa Mosque (1735), was clearly influenced by the pear-shaped signatures of Ahmed III (Fig.140).

Fig.140 The Pear-shaped Signature in the Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa Mosque, 1735AD

As discussed above, the first amongst Ottoman sultans to imitate Ahmed III's pear-shaped signature was Sultan Mahmud II, who was, in fact, influenced by his calligraphy master Mustafa Rakım Efendi. It is well-known that most of the calligraphic works of Mahmud II were organised under the supervision of Mustafa Rakım.[665] In some cases, the calligraphic *finesse* and the compositional order in Mahmud II's signatures are so similar to that of Mustafa Rakım's that it brings to light the possibility that Mahmud II 'commissioned' his signatures from his tutor. This first wave of revival of Ahmed's pear-shaped signature, therefore, occurred due to the cooperation of Mahmud II and his calligraphy master. Direct reference can be seen, for example, in the use of capping elements to the signatures of Mahmud II and Mustafa Rakım. Sultan Mahmud II, for instance, composed a similar pear-shaped signature in which the use of the inverted letter '*noūn*' as a capping element (Fig. 141) was identical to Ahmed III's prototype. The use of such topping elements in Mustafa Rakım's pear-shaped signatures again indicates a direct reference to the pear-shaped signatures of Ahmed III (Fig. 142).

[665] Berk, (2003), p.37

Fig.141 The Signature of Mahmud II, 'Mahmud *Hān*'

Fig.142 Mirrored, Compact Signature of Mustafa Rākım (d. 1826)

In addition, the pear-shaped signatures of Ahmed III on his *tughra*-shaped compositions at the entrance of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet and in the Imperial album inspired Mustafa Rākım to situate Mahmud II's title *Adlī* (the just) on the upper right section of his official *tughra* (Fig.143a, b).

(a)

(b)

Fig 143 a) Ahmed III's *Tughra*-shaped Composition with His Signature to its upper right Side; b)The *Tughra* of Mahmud II by Mustafa Rakım with the Sultanic Title '*Adlī* to its upper right Side

Outstanding calligraphers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries created compact signatures that were very similar to the pear-shaped signature of Ahmed III.

The resemblance between the form of some of these signatures and the use of capping letters indicate the loyalty maintained to the Ahmed III's original composition.[666] It seems clear that the idea of 'deforming' a letter in order to utilise it as a capping element in these compact composition was first introduced by Ahmed III with his pear-shaped signature.

Fig. 144 Pear-shaped Signatures of Leading Calligraphers of the nineteenth and Early twentieth Centuries

Abdülfettāh Efendi – Kazasker Mustafa Izzet – Mehmed Nazīf – Mehmed Şefīk

Mehmed Tāhir Efendi – Mustafa Rākım Efendi – Sāmī Efendi – Vahdetī Efendi

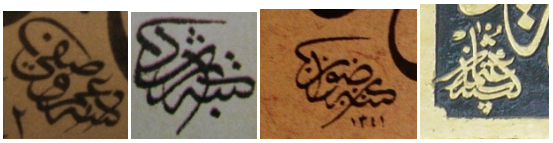
Vuslatī – Kazasker Mustafa İzzet – Abdullah Zühdī – Recāī Ef. – Sālih Efendi

Abdülbārī Ef. – Abdülkādir Ef. – Ahmed 'Ārif Ef. – 'Alāüddīn Ef. – Mehmed 'İlmī Efendi

[666] It was Professor Uğur Derman who first pointed out the resemblance between Ahmed III's pear-shaped signature and Post-Mustafa Rākım signatures of the nineteenth century. See Derman, (1970), p.731.

Fehmī Efendi– Halīm Özyazıcı– Hāmid Aytaç– Hayreddīn Ef.– Hulūsī Yazgan

Sāmī Ef.– Kāmil Akdik– Azīzu'r Rifā'ī – Mehmed Recāī – Necmeddīn Ef.– Ömer Fāik Efendi



Ömer Vasfī Efendi – Reşād Efendi – Ridvān al-Mısrī – Seyyid Osmān Efendi

As seen above in Figure 144, the signatures of the following are notable and successful applications of the pear-shaped signature, after Ahmed III: Abdülfettāh Efendi (d.1896), Mehmed Şefīk Efendi (d.1880), Mehmed Tāhir Efendi (d.1845), Mustafa Rākım (d.1826), Seyyid Osmān Efendi (d.1829), Sāmī Efendi (d.1912), Seyyid 'İzzet Mustafa (d.1876), Abdullah Zühdī (d.1879), Sālih Efendi (d.?), 'Abdülkādir Efendi (d.1967), Mehmed 'İlmī Efendi (d.1916), Fehmī Efendi (d.1915), Halīm Özyazıcı (d.1964), Hāmid Aytaç (d.1982), Kāmil Akdik (d.1941), 'Azīz al-Rifā'ī (d.1934), Mehmed Recāī Efendi (d.1874), Necmeddīn Okyay (d.1976).

VII.1.2 Couplet Signatures

Ahmed III's couplet-signatures created a fashion for signing *Tughra*s and *Tughra*-style compositions with this signature type, particularly in the second half of the eighteenth century. During the reigns of Sultans Mahmud I and Abdülhamīd I, monumental *Tughra*s were inscribed on to marble panels and signed with couplet signatures (Figs. 145, 146, 147).

Fig.145 *Tughra* of Mahmud I Signed with a Couplet Signature

Fig.146 *Tughra* of Abdulhamid I Signed with a Couplet Signature

Fig.147 *Tughra* of Abdulhamid I Signed with a Couplet Signature

Couplet signatures were often used to sign *Tughra*s until the reign of Mahmud II, under whom a revival of Ahmed III's pear-shaped signatures took place.

VII.1.3 The Tughra-shaped Signature

The *Tughra*-shaped signatures of Ahmed III, found on the *jalī thuluth tevhīd* panel above the entrance of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet and at the end of the Imperial *Tughra* Album also influenced his calligrapher successors. This influence can best be observed in the *nasta'līq* quatrain written by Ahmed III's son, Mustafa III (Fig.148).[667]

Fig.148 The *Nasta'līq* Quatrin by Sultan Mustafa III Signed with *Tughra* Signature

As discussed before, it was Ahmed III who, for the first time, employed the *tughra* as a calligraphy signature in his works. The same use, repeated by Mustafa III, can be interpreted as a sign of loyalty to his father's memory. Furthermore, I believe that Mustafa III was aware of the importance of his father's calligraphic innovations.

His *nas-ta'līq* quatrain features an innovative application of the *tughra* signature. Since Mīr 'Ali Harawi (d.1543) and 'Imād al-Hasanī (d.1615) created the *nasta'līq* style, quatrains have been popular among *nasta'līq* calligraphers treasured by the Safavid, Mughal and Ottoman courts. However, the signatures of these quatrains were traditionally always placed at the bottom of the composition, under the final line. Here, following his father's innovative methodology, Mustafa III located his *tughra*-signature above the quatrain. This placement could be explained by the stately nature of the *tughra;* this is clearly related to Ahmed III's approach. which transformed the *tughra* into a coat of arms, a heraldic sign, and, lastly but most importantly, into an individual calligraphic format.

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[667] TIEM, Inv. No.2785

VII.2 The Impact of Tughra-shaped Compositions:

To reiterate, Ahmed III was the first calligrapher to convertthe Ottoman imperial monogram into an individual calligraphic format; he designed *Tughra*-shaped compositions by composing poetic texts in the form of the *Tughra*. Influenced by the Album of Ahmed I[668], which included *naskh* inscriptions, Ahmed III composed an album consisting of ten different *Tughra*-shaped compositions. The *Tughra*-shaped compositions of Ahmed III created a new path in the history of Ottoman calligraphy. The *tughra*, the signature of sultans, now became an alternative calligraphic format. Some calligraphers executed identical copies of Ahmed's *tughra*-shaped compositions, while others composed new *tughra*-shaped compositions with various texts, including short verses from the *Qur'an*, the *tevhīd* formula, short *hadith*s, the names of the five major Prophets[669], names and titles of Muslim saints, etc. *Tughra*-shaped compositions executed in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, therefore, strengthened the unity of religious content and the *tughra* format. In other words, at this time the *tughra* was not only a royal signature used in stately matters but also a blazon including *Quranic* verses and religious quotations (Fig.149).

Fig.149 Two *Tughra*-shaped compositions, following the principles of Ahmed III, Late Eighteenth Century

Religious quotations composed in the *tughra* format were much admired by members of the upper-class for dervish-lodges. For this reason, in the mid-eighteenth century, *tughra*-shaped compositions were particularly in demand among members of dervish-lodges. As a result, calligraphers of Sufi background and calligrapher-

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[668] *Topkapı* Palace Museum Library, No: B. 408
[669] Adam (Adam), Ibrāhim (Abraham), Mūsa (Moses), Isā (Jesus), Muhammad

members of dervish-lodges created their own, free, *tughra*-shaped compositions, which came to form an individual style. *Tughra*-shaped compositions of this type have been classified in Turkish as *tekke tuğrası* (Dervish-lodge *Tughra*). Such *Tughra*-shaped compositions were rarely composed by courtly calligraphers until the nineteenth century.

The earliest epigraphic imperial *tughra* was found in the Chancery Hall of the Topkapı Palace. The second example is found next to the mihrab of the Nūr-i Osmaniye Mosque while the third is seen on the minbar of the Laleli Mosque. The *tughra*s of Sultan Mustafa III in the Nūr-i Osmaniye and Laleli mosques are the earliest examples of the epigraphic imperial *tughra* used in the mosque. There placement is indicative of a certain kind of propaganda which unites the stately nature of the *tughra* with the religious character of the mosque. İnce notes that the earliest example of an exterior 'epigraphic imperial *tughra*' is on the fountain of Sultan Selīm III, built in 1802, in Üsküdar[670]. There are seven decades between the first interior epigraphic *tughra* and the first exterior epigraphic *tughra*.

It has been noted by Haskan that, for the first time in the history of Üsküdar, the Turkish emblem of the star and crescent appears on the fountain of Selīm III[671]. This shows that at this time the Ottomans were beginning to seek a 'logo' which could be used as a sign of Ottoman identity. Thus, this period can be seen as a time of experimentation in which the imperial *tughra* was depicted in different places and the *jalī thuluth* script was used in different designs to establish a new epigraphic image. The *tughra*s in Nūr-u Osmāniye and Laleli can be considered stages of this process. In this context, the use of Sultan Mustafa III's *tughra* on the minbar of Laleli can perhaps be seen as an attempt to unify the imperial monogram with the meaning and religious nature of the *minbar* (Fig.150): the *tughra* symbolizes both the unity of the sultan's authority and the official, religious nature of the *khutba* (sermon read in the name of the Sultan at the Friday prayers).

[670] İnce, (1999), p.279
[671] Haskan, (2001), p.1161

Fig. 150.The Minbar of the Laleli Mosque with the *Tughra* of Sultan Mustafa III

Following its introduction in Nur-u Osmaniye and Laleli, the 'epigraphic *tughra*' was widely used and placed above the portals of palaces, mosques and fountains. After the reign of Sultan Mahmud II this turned into a '*tughra*-mania,' evident in the widespread use of imperial *tughra*s on tombstones, desks, scribe boxes, book covers, flags, jewellery, Kütahya tiles and even tobacco boxes.

The presentation of individual, framed *tughra*s is linked to the use of Baroque elements in art and architecture at the time. One might suppose that the increasing acceptance of the Baroque in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries brought the European notions of imperial signs, monograms and blazons to the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, their placement as epigraphic entities in an architectural setting, as seen above in the mosques of Nūr-u Osmāniye and Laleli, can also be seen to have its precedent in European architecture, where the ruler's coat-of-arms was often placed above gateways and on other prominent locations. This suggestion may explain the strange unity between the 'foreign' Baroque elements and the 'local' *tughra*s in Nūr-u Osmāniye and Laleli.

It was only after Mustafa Rākım that *tughra*-shaped compositions became seriously subject to the interest of courtly *tughra* scribes, such as Abdülfettah Efendi, Recai Efendi and Sāmī Efendi. Most of the calligraphers who worked on *tughra*-shaped compositions followed Ahmed III's criteria in terms of composition and design. Unfortunately, these works have received very little scholarly attention to date.

Tughra-style compositions, by both members of dervish-lodges and professional calligraphers, have been mostly ignored or overlooked.

It is worth mentioning that even the *tughra*-shaped composition on the *waqf*-seal of the Library of Ahmed III was imitated and recomposed to create the *waqf*-seals of Sultan Mahmud I, Sultan Osman III, Sultan Mustafa III and Sultan Abdülhamīd I (Fig.151).

Fig. 151 *Waqf*-seal of Sultan Mustafa III

The discussion of the impact of Ahmed III's *tughra*-shaped compositions may be concluded with the decree confirmation, '*mūcebince 'amel oluna* (should be done as required),' composed by the Sultan in a *tughra* format. It was Ahmed III who approached this phrase as an individual text, applicable in different calligraphic formats. Following this attitude, calligraphers also began using this phrase in different compositions. A calligraphic album consisting of various *mūcebince 'amel oluna* designs is found in the Topkapı Palace Museum (TSMK.H.2247).[672] The continuation of the phrases employed in Ahmed III's calligraphic works indicates an ongoing interest in his art.

One final example shall be mentioned, found above the southern entrance of the Ayasofya Mosque, where an interesting mirrored composition of Mahmud II's *Tughra* is found. The *tughra*, placed to the left of the entrance, has been placed as a mirror image on the right hand side. The idea of situating two *tughra*s on either side of the entrance can be directly related to the parallel *tughra*s of Ahmed III in the Scribe's hall of the Topkapı Palace.

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[672] See; *Topkapı* a Versailles, p.184

VII.2.1 Imitations of a Masterpiece: Copies of the Hadith-tughra

Of the *tughra*-shaped compositions of Ahmed III, the most esteemed and copied was undoubtedly the *hadith-tughra* which read: *Shafā'ati li ahl al-Qabāiri min ummatī*; 'My intercession is for those who commit greater sins in my community' (Fig.152).[673]

Fig.152 The *Hadith-tughra* by Sultan Ahmed III

The *hadith-tughra* of Ahmed III was a subject of interest and source of inspiration for many subsequent calligraphers and was copied many times following Ahmed III's lifetime. One may liken these copies to three-dimensional models of monuments,[674] or even to later copies of classical monuments. The resemblance between Sinan's Kılı çAli Paşa Mosque, built in 1581, and the Ayasofya Mosque could be seen as an equivalent of this latter application in architecture. Similar to the reasoning behind building pious foundations, by copying Ahmed III's *Hadith-tughra* calligraphers were attempting to bring blessing upon their soul.

Observing the application of the *Hadith-tughra* in the interior of fifteenth and sixteenth century mosques, it may be assumed that these were used to decorate these particular monuments after the death of Ahmed III. For example, under Abdülhamīd I, in 1777, Ahmed III's *Hadith-tughra* was applied on the western wall of the Great Mosque of Bursa (Fig.153); this is a monumental composition measuring more than two meters in height. Strangely, there is no reference to Ahmed III and a viewer of

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[673] *Hadith* scholar Al-Aclūnī has pointed many important resources with regard to the origins of this *hadith*. See; Al-Aclūnī, (1988), Vol:II, p.10.
[674] In 1582, when Prince Mehmed, later Mehmed III (r.1595-1603), was circumcised, a model of the Süleymaniye Mosque was borne along the ceremonial precession. See; Faroqhi, (2005), p.139

the signature may easily think that the *tughra*-shaped composition was designed by Kātibzāde Hasan b. Mustafa Cezāirī, the calligrapher who copied Ahmed's original version.

Fig.153 The *Hadith-Tughra* of Ahmed III, in the Great Mosque of Bursa, signed by Katibzāde Hasan b. Mustafa known as 'Cezāirī', dated A.H. 1192 (A.D. 1777)

Another monumental application of this *Hadith-tughra* in a mosque is at the Eski Mosque in Edirne (Figs. 154, 155. Ahmed III's *Hadith-tughra* was portrayed in this mosque twice, and was most probably applied during the 1863 restoration. Its first usage is on the southern wall while the second is on the pillar in front of the *minbar*. The *tughra*-shaped composition on the southern wall is the largest calligraphic composition in the mosque. The *Hadith-tughra* of Ahmed III also appears in the t ransitional zone of the Yeni Camii in Vodina (Modern Edessa) (Fig. 156).

Fig.154 The *Hadith-tughra* of Ahmed III on the southern wall of the Eski Mosque, Edirne

Fig. 155.The *Hadith-tughra* in Edirne Eski Mosque

Fig. 156 Sultan Ahmed III's *Hadith-tughra* on the Transitional Zone of the Yeni Camii in Vodina

Many calligraphic panels bearing the Hadith-*tughra* of Ahmed III were executed in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I would like to argue that the variety of these works indicate a common and continued appreciation for Ahmed III's *Hadith-tughra*, which was essentially transformed into a logo. As far as I know, no other *tughra*-style composition attracted so much attention, nor was another copied so many times. A calligraphic panel written by Seyyid Hakīm in 1767 is the earliest identical copy of the *Hadith-tughra* known to us (Fig.157).

Fig. 157.The *Hadith-Tughra* of Ahmed III copied and signed by Seyyid Hakim, Dated 1181 A.H. (1767 A.D.)

This panel by Seyyid Hakīm was executed during the reign of Mustafa III, Ahmed III's son, who was likely also the one to commission it. A *Hadith-tughra* executed by Ahmed Rāzī Efendi, a member of the scribal office of the court, and dated 1191AH/1776AD, shows the ongoing interest in Ahmed III's *Hadith-tughra* throughout the eighteenth century (Fig.158). A particularly interesting feature of this work is the Turkish quatrain located to the upper right side of the *Hadith-tughra*. The quatrain is about one's willingness of receiving divine grace.

Fig. 158 The *Hadith-tughra* by Ahmed Rāzī Efendi, Dated 1191AH/1776AD

The organization of this panel, uniting the *Hadith-tughra* and the Turkish quatrain, seems to be a step further in the sanctification of the Ottoman royal monogram. The interest in the *Hadith-tughra* of Ahmed III grew during the reign of his grandson, Selīm III. An outstanding example produced during his reign is found in the Harem collection of the Topkapı Palace. Directly referencing the text of the *Hadith-tughra*, the composition has been surrounded with a poem by Vāsıf-ı Enderūnī, Selīm III's court poet, in praise of the Prophet (Fig.159).

Fig. 159. A Copy of the *Hadith-Tughra* of Sultan Ahmed III Enframed by a Poem by Vāsıf-ı Enderūnī

Another outstanding copy of Ahmed III's *Hadith-tughra* is in the Demirören Collection in İstanbul (Fig.160). Although it is not signed, the *tughra* of Selīm III found on the frame indicates that it was produced during his reign, and probably at his order.

Fig. 160. A Copy of the *Hadith-tughra* of Sultan Ahmed III, Anonymous Artist, Second Half of the Eighteenth Century, Private Collection, İstanbul

Another unsigned copy of the *Hadith-tughra* is found in the Collection of Edwin Binney 3rd, where it has been catalogued as 'inscription in *tughra* form' (Fig.161).[675] In this case, the three dots of the ش (*sheen*) which are missing in the original composition have been placed by the unknown calligrapher to the right-hand side of the composition, above the two extending arms. It has mistakenly been noted in the entry of the collection catalogue that 'the very intricate flourish, otherwise indecipherable, seems to include the word *pādişāh* (emperor)'.[676]

Fig. 161. A Copy of the *Hadith-tughra* of Sultan Ahmed III, Anonymous Artist, Second Half of the Eighteenth Century

The production of copies of the *Hadith-tughra* of Ahmed III seems to have continued throughout the entire reign of Selim III. A later example from his reign is another panel of the *Hadith-tughra* signed by Hāfız Mustafa, dated 1806 (Fig.162).

[675] New York 1973, p.105
[676] Oregon (1979), p.130

Fig. 162. A Copy of the *Hadith-Tughra* of Sultan Ahmed III, Signed by Hāfiz Mustafa better-known as Enderūnī, Dated 1221 A.H/1806 A.D., 40x29 cm., Private Collection, İstanbul

In addition to high quality imitations of the *Hadith-tughra*, copies of average quality were also executed by amateur calligraphers, mostly by members of dervish-lodges. An unsigned nineteenth century panel bearing Ahmed's *Hadith-tughra* is found in a private collection in İstanbul (Fig. 163). This piece, lacking in calligraphic quality and proportion, is important in terms of understanding the importance of the *Hadith-tughra* to the common people. To my knowledge, no other *tughra*-shaped composition was so commonly used (Figs. 164, 165).

Fig. 163. A Nineteenth-Century Copy of the *Hadith-tughra* of Sultan Ahmed III, Private Collection, İstanbul

Fig. 164. An Early Nineteenth-century Copy of the *Hadith-tughra* of Sultan Ahmed III

Fig. 165. A Nineteenth-Century Copy of the *Hadith-tughra* of Sultan Ahmed III, Signed by Recāī

The copy of the *Hadith-tughra* seen in Figure 157 by Recāī Efendi was itself reproduced in the early twentieth century reproduced as a decoupage. This latter work is today in the Khalili Collection (KC: CAL 8);[677] it is signed by Rıfkı and dated 1323AH/1905AD.

The *Hadith-tughra* of Ahmed III was not only used s a stand-alone composition, but was also utilised as the centre of some *hilye*-panels in the nineteenth century. Of these, a *hilye*-panel signed by Sālih Recāī Efendi in a private collection in İstanbul, is noteworthy (Fig.166).

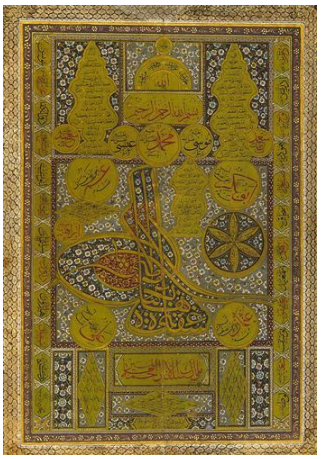

Fig. 166. The *Hadith-Tughra* of Sultan Ahmed III, Applied on a *Hilyeh*-panel by Sālih Recāī

In this piece, the *Hadith-tughra* of Ahmed III has been placed in the centre of the composition, surrounded by the *hilye* text which consists of a description of the

[677] Safwat, (1996), p.203

Prophet. This composite piece enables us to see Ahmed III's impact on the transition of the *Tughra* from a stamp on stately documents and coins to a decorative device on *hilye*-panels. With regard to its text, that of the *Hadith-tughra* was incorporated into the layout and design of the *hilye*-panel. Undoubtedly, in this context the *Hadith-tughra* had been transformed into a source of grace.

Fig. 167 A Nineteenth Century *Thuluth-Naskh* Panel by Ahmed Nāilī Efendi Bearing the *Hadith-Tughra* of Sultan Ahmed III

Another composite calligraphic creation in which Ahmed's *Hadith-tughra* was employed is a *thuluth-naskh* panel by Ahmed Naili Efendi, in the Ibnulemin Mahmud Kemal Inal Collection of the İstanbul University Library (IUNEK IM.85). In this instance, however, the imitation of the *Hadith-tughra* is placed at the top half of the composition, as it would have been on an official *Tughra* (Fig.167).

In terms of alternate applications of the *Hadith-tughra,* I would like to draw the reader's attention to some nineteenth century tombstones (Figs. 168, 169, 170, 171).

Fig. 168. A Nineteenth Century Tombstone Bearing the *Hadith-Tughra* of Sultan Ahmed III, the Mausoleum of Mustafa Devātī, İstanbul

Fig. 169. A Nineteenth Century Tombstone Bearing the *Hadith-Tughra* of Sultan Ahmed III, the Eski Topkapı Cemetary, İstanbul

Fig. 170. A Nineteenth Century Tombstone Bearing the *Hadith-Tughra* of Sultan Ahmed III, the Eyüp Sultan Cemetary, İstanbul

Fig. 171. A Nineteenth Century Tombstone Bearing the *Hadith-Tughra* of Sultan Ahmed III, the Eyüp Sultan Cemetary, İstanbul

Following Ahmed III, the aforementioned *hadith, shafāatī li-ahl al-kabāir min ummatī,* played a crucial role in the Ottoman epigraphic repertoire, calligraphed either as *Tughra*-style compositions or in straight lines of *thuluth*. These were done on a wide range of materials and different media, including Ka'ba coverings.[678] In memory of his ancestor's *Hadith-tughra*, Sultan Mahmud II composed *jalī thuluth* panels bearing the same *hadith*. One of these panels, signed by Mahmud II and dated 1245A.H./1829A.D., is in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum (TIEM 2774) (Fig.172). A second one, bearing the same *hadith*, is in the Khalili Collection (KC:CAL312).[679]

Fig. 172. A *Jalī Thuluth* Inscription by Sultan Mahmud II (TIEM 2774)

VII.2.2 The Impact of the Imperial Tughra Album (TSM A.2280)

As has already been highlighted, the Imperial *Tughra* Album of Ahmed III influenced many calligraphers of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many *Tughra*-style compositions designed by the Sultan were later copied and transferred on to the panel format. For instance, the second *Tughra*-shaped composition of the Imperial album, which reads '*Muhammad sayyid al-kawnayn wa al-thaqalayn* (Muhammed, master of this world and the next, of man and jinn),' was reproduced on a panel by a calligrapher called Abdülkadir (Figs.173, 174). This mid-eighteenth century panel is found in the Harem Collection of the Topkapı Palace[680].

[678] A Nineteenth-Century Ka'ba cover (*burqa*) fragment bearing the above-mentioned *hadith* is found in the *Topkapı* Palace Museum, TSM, Inv. No. 24/70 [Published in *Islam, Faith & Worship*, 2009, p.68].
[679] Safwat, (1996), p.159
[680] *Topkapı* Palace Harem Collection No: 8/582

Fig. 173. The Second *Tughra*-shaped Composition in the Imperial Album of Sultan Ahmed III: *Muhammad Sayyid al-Kawnayn wa al-Thaqalayn* (Muhammed, Master of This World and The next, of Man and Jinn)

Fig. 174. The copy of Ahmed III's Second *Tughra*-shaped Composition from the Royal *Tughra* Album on a panel in the Topkapı Palace (The Harem Collection Inv No: 8/582)

Similarly, the third *tughra* composition of the album, '*Mûcebince amel oluna* (let it be done as required)' was copied and transferred to a panel. [681] It was Mir Halil, son of Tawqii Ali Paşa, who copied this *tughra*-shaped composition from the Imperial Album during the reign of Abdülhamīd I (Figs.175, 176). Aksoy has published this particularly interesting work of Mir Halil with no reference to Ahmed III. [682]

[681] 'A common mistake is pronoucing "mūcebince" as "mūcibince". The word "mūcebince" refers to a confirmation of a high ranking officer in a stately document or transaction.' Pakalın, Vol:II, p.560
[682] Aksoy, (1977), p.135

Fig. 175. The "*Mūcebince 'Amel Oluna" Tughra*-shaped Composition of Sultan Ahmed III

Fig. 176. A Copy of the "*Mūcebince 'Amel Oluna" Tughra*-shaped Composition of Sultan Ahmed III, Copied by Mīr Halīl, Private Collection, İstanbul

According to Müstakimzāde, Mīr Halīl was in his youth among the pupils of the calligrapher Hüseyin Hablī (d.1744) and became a master in the styles of *thuluth* and *naskh*[683]. The case of Mīr Halīl indicates the existence of a workshop that enabled various formulas to be introduced in the *tughra* format, or, in other words, consisted of a circle of *tughra*-scribes (*tuğrâi*, *tuğrakeş*, *nişancı*, *tevkii* tr.).

VII.2.3 Branding the Palace: The Impact of Sultan Ahmed III's Tughra-shaped Compositions on the Epigraphic Repertoire of the Topkapı *Palace*

As discussed in the 'Evolution of the *tughra* under Ahmed III', Ahmed III placed his *tughra* and *tughra*-shaped compositions in the halls and above the gates of the Topkapı Palace, an act which introduced the *tughra* as part of the epigraphic repertoire of the Topkapı Palace. The two *tughra*-shaped compositions of Ahmed III at the entrance of the Hall of Mantle of the Prophet are the earliest examples of this application (Fig.177).

[683] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.195

Fig.177. The *Tughra*-shaped Compositions Located to the Left and Right Sides of the Entrance of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, The Topkapı Palace

Ahmed III's successors situated their own *tughra*s on either side of the gates of the palace, and some commissioned *tughra*-shaped compositions in praise of themselves. Following Ahmed III's initiative, placing *tughra*s on either side of the palatial gates became a tradition. It was his son, Sultan Mustafa III, who positioned his *tughras* with two *nasta'liq* panels of honorific poems to each side of the Middle-Gate (*Orta Kapı*), facing the second courtyard (Fig.178).

Fig. 178. The Two *Tughra*s of Mustafa III (r. 1757-74) on the Middle-Gate (Orta Kapi), The Topkapı Palace.

Sultan Mustafa IV placed his *tughra*s in a similar way, with *nasta'liq* panels of honorific poems on the inner side of the Middle-Gate, facing the third court of the palace (Fig.179).

Fig. 179. The *Tughra*s of Sultan Mustafa IV (r. 1807-8) on the Inner Side of the Middle-Gate (*Orta Kapı*), The Topkapı Palace.

It was Sultan Abdülhamīd I who enjoyed the privilege of situating his *tughra* on either sides of the most prestigious gate of the palace, the so-called 'Gate of Felicity' (*Babu's-sa'āde*) (Fig.180).

Fig. 180. The *Tughra*s of Sultan Abdülhamīd I (r. 1774-89) on the So-called Gate of Felicity (*Bābü's-sa'āde*), The Topkapı Palace

In addition to the *tughra*s located on the Gate of Felicity, Abdülhamīd I commissioned two *tughra*-shaped compositions in praise of himself which were then placed on the inner side of the same gate, facing the Chamber of Petitions. The similarity between the location of Ahmed III's calligraphic compositions on the entrance to the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet and the *tughra*s in praise of Abdülhamīd I on the inner side of the Gate of Felicity is worthy of notice. Following the *jalī thuluth 'ra's al-ḥikmat makhāfat-allāh'* of Ahmed III found above the inner side of the Gate of Felicity, Abdülhamīd I placed his self-praising *tughra*-shaped compositions to both sides of the same gate (Fig.181). This can be seen as a an attempt by Abdülhamīd I to transform the inner side of the Gate of Felicity into a

second ‘copy’ of the entrance of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, which served as its prototype.

Fig. 181. The *Tughra*-shaped Compositions in Praise of Sultan Abdulhamid I on the Inner Side of the Gate of Felicity (*Babü’s-sa’āde*), The Topkapı Palace

The *Tughra*-shaped composition on the right-hand side of the Gate of Felicity, facing the chamber of petitions, is the first line of a couplet in praise of Abdülhamīd I, which reads:

Cünd-i Hākān-i zī-şān hākim-i hükm-i Mecīd

(The glorious soldier king, the ruler of the all-mighty’s rule) (Fig.182)

Fig. 182. The right *Tughra*-shaped Composition in Praise of Sultan Abdulhamid I (r. 1774-89), Located to the Inner Side of the Gate of Felicity (*Babü’s-sa’āde*), The Topkapı Palace

The one to the left of the inner side of the Gate of Felicity, is the second line of the couplet praising Abdülhamīd I, reading:

Hāmi-i ‘adl u şeri’at hazret-i Abdülhamīd

(The protector of justice and law, his highness Abdülhamīd) (Fig.183)

Fig. 183. The left *Tughra*-shaped Composition in Praise of Sultan Abdülhamīd I (r. 1774-89), Located to the Inner Side of the Gate of Felicity (*Babü's-sa'āde*), The Topkapı Palace

The likeness between the text of the *tughra*-shaped compositions of Ahmed III and Abdülhamīd I indicates a direct literary connection between these compositions. The two later *tughra*-shaped compositions in praise of Sultan Abdülmecid, located to the right and left of the entrance to the Chamberof Petitions, are beautiful samples following the same tradition of placing *tughra*-shaped compositions next to significant gates of the palace.

The first *tughra*-shaped composition praising Sultan Abdülmecid is located to the right of the entrance to the Chamber of Petitions. Differentiating them from their earlier counterparts, the *tughra*-shaped compositions in praise of Abdülmecid were not composed in the traditional *thuluth* style, but instead in *nasta'līq*.[684] It is the first line of a couplet, similar to the above-mentioned compositions in praise of Abdülhamīd I.

The first *tughra*-shaped composition in praise of Abdülmecid reads:

Şehriyār-i pür-kerem zıll-i cenāb-i kibriyā

(The generous sultan, the shadow of God) (Fig.184)

[684] Müstakimzāde notes that the inventor of *tughra*-shaped compositions written in *nasta'liq* was Çalkandızāde Mustafa Arif Efendi. [Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.742]

Fig. 184. The *Tughra*-shaped Composition in Praise of Sultan Abdülmecid (r. 1839-61), Located to the Right Side of the Entrance of the Chamber of Petitions (*Arz Odası*), The Topkapı Palace

The second *Tughra*-shaped composition praising Abdülmecid reads,

Hazret-i Abdülmecid Hān al-muzaffer dāimā

(His highness King Abdülmecid, the always victorious) (Fig.185)

Fig. 185. The *Tughra*-shaped Composition in Praise of Sultan Abdülmecid (r. 1839-61), Located to the Left Side of the Entrance of the Chamber of Petitions (*Arz Odası*), The Topkapı Palace

Even for a well-educated viewer, the *Tughra*-shaped compositions of Abdülhamīd I and Abdülmecid were not at all easy to decipher. Therefore, in both instances, the texts of their poetic *tughra*s were also given in *nasta'liq* script beneath the *tughra*-shaped compositions.

The tradition of composing *tughra*-shaped compositions in praise of sultans came to an end following the reign of Sultan Abdülmecid. The first reason for this was the construction of the new Dolma-bahçe Palace on the shore of the Bosphorus. As a result of its construction, the Topkapı Palace was no longer the official residence of the sultans. The second reason must have been due to the technical difficulty of

composing a couplet of which each line could be transformed into the form of a *Tughra*. In addition, it could be suggested that after Abdülmecid's reign, the members of the Ottoman upper-class were no longer as connected to their traditional identity as they had been. The ending of the production of *tughra*-shaped compositions may represent a departure from the 'neo-classical', established by Ahmed III.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

During the reign of Sultan Ahmed III, outstanding innovations in the composition, representation and textual organization of calligraphy took place due to his personal input and contributions, both as a calligrapher and as a patron of calligraphy. Of his contributions, the Sultan's invention of the *tughra*-shaped composition, his innovative signatures and his employment of the panel format as a message-giving tool are remarkable. His inventiveness and initiative in the composition, textual organization and placement of his calligraphic works are no less important than his outstanding skills and mastery in the art of calligraphy. However the foremost significant factor of Ahmed III's calligraphic works is that, as a coherent group, they served as a legitimizing device.

The practice of calligraphy has always been a source of prestige for Muslim monarchs, but in the case of Ahmed III it went beyond that. Due to the decreasing number of new military conquests and unsuccessful campaigns, the Sultan employed his calligraphic works as a way to replace the diminishing image of the 'Warrior/*ghāzi* Sultan' with that of the 'Pious/Omniscient Sultan'. Tributes composed by court poets, particularly by Nedīm Efendi and Seyyid Vehbī Efendi, perfectly portrayed Ahmed III's new image as an ideal, pious sultan. Rarely referring to the classical concept of a warrior/*ghāzi* sultan, these poems praised his intellect and likened him to ancient Greek philosophers for his wisdom and insight into science. He was also the only Ottoman sultan who was likened to early master calligraphers, including Yāqūt al-Musta'simī, for his calligraphic skills.

Seeking approval from the '*ulema* and the army, he emphasized the Islamic nature of his rulership as his primary concernt through his calligraphy. Besides this, he used his compositions to deliver his messages of rulership and devoutness both to the Ottoman elite and the general Muslim community, the *umma*. In this respect, the common body of his calligraphic works formed what one may call a 'royal notice-board', through which the Sultan addressed both common people and the elite, whose support ensured his political power. The monumental inscriptions he placed on public fountains and the calligraphic panels he installed in mosques and mausoleums delivered select *Quranic* verses, *hadith*s and self-honouring poems to the public. His monumental inscriptions and calligraphic panels in the Topkapı

Palace, on the other hand, delivered his pious messages to a rather limited audience. In the history of Ottoman calligraphy, Ahmed III was the first calligrapher-sultan who placed his own calligraphic monumental inscriptions and panels in the Topkapı Palace. The Sultan also commissioned overlaid gold copies of his calligraphic panels written in ink in order to place a particular calligraphic composition in multiple places. These gold calligraphic panels appear to be the earliest extant examples of their kind and mark the introduction of a new calligraphic technique.

Ahmed III was the first Ottoman calligrapher-sultan who announced the legitimacy of his rulership by composing and penning poems honouring himself. The self-honouring aspect of his art can best be observed in his placement of monumental inscriptions on monuments which he either commissioned or restored, a few examples of which will be reiterated here. In the monumental inscriptions on his two public fountains, the Sultan praised himself as an enthusiastic patron of charitable endowments. The chronogram on the public fountain in Üsküdar states that "with God's generosity the fountain (of Ahmed III) watered the universe through the hand of Prophet Muhammad". In the chronogram of the Dırağman Mosque he defined himself as "the builder of the dervish-lodge of God's unity". Lastly, in his two *Tughra*-shaped compositions carved on each side of the entrance to the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet in the Topkapı Palace, the Sultan defined himself as; "The king of the world, the most honourable ruler" and "Sultan Ahmed, the follower of the holy law".

The choice of textual content on Ahmed III's calligraphic panels was new in that they offered a range of short texts: single *Quranic* verses or *hadith*s. The script was sized according to the dimensions of the panel and the content shortened. The sole aim of this organisation was to provide eye-catching works in which the Sultan's message could easily be perceived by the viewer. These messages were portrayed by the *Quranic* verses and *hadith*s employed, which projected the image of an excessively pious ruler preaching to his people through his calligraphic panels. The textual content of the *Quranic* verses and *hadith*s in these calligraphic panels primarily concentrate on two main virtues, "trust in God"[685] and "loyalty"[686].

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[685] TIEM 2714, TSM 8/322

Ahmed III appears to be the first Ottoman calligrapher-sultan who compiled individual calligraphic albums. His two calligraphic albums display his mastery of intricate calligraphic designs, particularly in composing *tughra*s. In these two albums, the Sultan wished to display his mastery both of traditional scripts and innovative designs. Ahmed III was also the first calligrapher-sultan to copy works of an early master to prove his mastery of classic scripts, and in his *Muhaqqaq-Thuluth* Album (TSM A.3652), the Sultan demonstrated this mastery. However, in the Imperial *Tughra* Album (TSMK A.3653), he clearly aimed to display his creativity in creating innovative compositions in the form of the imperial monogram. The perfection and originality of this album was praised by court poets and approved of by many master calligraphers of the period. In the history of Ottoman court literature, the earliest eulogies composed in praise of a sultan's calligraphic works appear to be those composed for the calligraphic albums of Ahmed III.

The increasing significance of the *tughra* was most likely due to the Sultan's search for an Ottoman equivalent of the European coat-of-arms. It was Ahmed III who, for the first time, employed the *tughra* in a religious context by composing *tughra*s using *hadith* texts. Over and above its use as the primary signifier of the Ottoman sultan, the *tughra* began to gain an almost sacred character after the creation of the *Hadith-tughra* by Sultan Ahmed III. The employment of the *tughra* in palatial epigraphy was another innovation of the Sultan. Although the employment of the *tughra* as an epigraphic element goes back to the reign of Murād II (r.1421-1444), it was Ahmed III who had his two *tughra*-shaped compositions carved on either side of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet in the Topkapı Palace. With these two compositions, the *tughra* entered of the epigraphic repertoire of the palace.

There are two outstanding *tughra*-shaped compositions in Ahmed III's Imperial Album (TSMK A.3653**)** containing the titles of the Prophet Muhammad. By composing the titles of the Prophet in the *tughra* format, the Sultan aimed to impart a spiritual character onto the *tughra*. In fact, by designing *tughra*s for the Prophet, the Sultan became the *nişancı* (*tughra*-scribe) of the Prophet. This could only have been done by Ahmed III and not an ordinary calligrapher as it was he who was the last in the line of Ottoman caliphs, who considered themselves to be the successors of the

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[686] TVHSM 2125, TIEM 2800

Prophet. The Sultan converted the *tughra* into a semi-religious sign which served both as a royal monogram and as an emblem of the caliphate. In addition to the two *tughra*s of the Prophet, the Sultan designed the *Hadith-tughra*. This created a second link between the *tughra* and Prophet Muhammad in which the *tughra* bore a saying of the Prophet. In this respect, Ahmed III's prophetic *tughra*s and his *Hadith-tughra* must be regarded as what may be referred to as all-powering talismans.

The Sultan considered his calligraphic works not only as a source of prestige and a tool of propaganda, but also as a medium by which he could obtain prayers and blessings. This intention is clearly stated in the chronogram created by the Sultan and placed on the public fountain in front of the imperial gate of the Topkapı Palace, asking the visitor to pray for his soul.

Sultan Ahmed III was not an outstanding patron of architecture. However, his calligraphic works were different kinds of monuments used to commemorate his name. Instead of building a second mosque in his own name after the construction of the one he commissioned in Üsküdar in the name of his mother, Ahmed preferred to create a legacy through his calligraphic works. It was no coincidence that eulogies similar to those composed for early sultans' mosques were composed for Ahmed III's calligraphic works. In these poems, common literary metaphors which were used in praise of architectural commissions were instead used in praise of the Sultan's *Hadith-tughra* and the Imperial *Tughra* Album. Similar to the mosques and pious complexes built by his ancestors, the common message of Ahmed III's calligraphic works directed the thoughts of the viewer to piety and devoutness. Most importantly, this explicit campaign of monumental messages was designed and produced by no ordinary artist, but by the Sultan himself.

Ahmed III's outstanding fame as a calligrapher sultan helped to determine the methods of sultanic self-representation chosen by his successors. His heirs, in particular Mustafa III (r.1757-1774), Mahmud II (r.1808-1839), Abdülmecid (r.1839-1861) and Abdülaziz (r.1861-1876), continued to practise calligraphy as a legitimizing device and employed their own works as tools of propaganda to compliment their sultanic image. Furthermore, in a period of increasing Westernization in the Ottoman Empire, calligraphy became the only major reference of the Ottoman elites' loyalty to Islam.

Sultan Ahmed III was not the greatest of Ottoman calligraphers but he was certainly the most original. As a sultan, his approach to calligraphy was unusual and his career idiosyncratic. What he achieved could not have been accomplished by an ordinary calligrapher. His approach marked a turning point not only in the history of Ottoman calligraphy, but also in the history of the self-legitimization of the Ottoman dynasty.

GLOSSARY

***Abjad* (arab.)**:An Arabic word for alphabet; the word has been used to refer to the consonant-based writing systems of the Semtitc languages (Arabic, Heabrew, Aramaic), in which each letter is given a numerical value.

Balanced script: A script in which the size and proportions of each letter can be calculated based on the number of square dots imprinted by the nib of a reed pen.

***Basmala* (arab.)**: An Arabic noun for the phrase *bism-Allah-al-Raḥman-al-Raḥīm* 'In the name of God the Merciful the Compassionate'. This phrase opens the first *surah* of the *Qur'an*.

***Bayt* (arab.)**: A poetic verse consisting of two hemistichs, a couplet.

The Six Scripts (*Aqlām Sittah*): The six popular scripts of calligraphy: *thulth*, *naskh*, *muhaqqaq*, *rayhāni*, *tawqi*, *riqa'*. Their invention is ascribed to Ibn Bawwab and Jamal al-Dīn Yaqut al-Musta'simī.

Caliph (arab.): The supreme head of the Muslim community.

Cāmi (Ott): Mosque

Chaghatay: A Turkic language once widely spoken in central Asia.

Colophon: The text typically found at the end of a manuscript or printed book which details the facts pertaining to its composition and production.

Diacritical Dots: The dots used in the Arabic script to distinguish between letters sharing the identicle base-form.

Diacritical Signs: Non-letter signs written in Arabic below and/or above a consonant to indicate short vowels, the absence of a vowel or the *nunation*.

***Dīwān* (arab.)**: An office (in Ottoman Turkish primarily refers to council of state), a poet's collected poems or a selection of poems.

***Dīwānī* (arab.)**: A type of script developed from *nas-ta'liq* by Ottoman chancery scribes; literally 'belonging to the imperial chancery'.

***Jalī* (arab.)**: 'Clear', 'plain', 'enlarged': applied to a large variety of the six scripts.

***Fatha* (arab.)**: A non-letter sign written above a consonant in Arabic, used to indicate a short vowel.

***Firman* (pers)**: A royal proclamation or deed.

***Ghubār* (arab.)**: A tiny round script, literally 'dust'.

***Hadīth* (arab.)**: A tradition relating to the words or deeds of the Prophet Muhammad.

Hand: An individual's execution of a particular script.

***Imām* (arab.)**: A spiritual leader of the Muslim community, one who leads prayers.

***Kasra* (arab.)**: A non-letter sign written below a consonant in Arabic indicating the short vowel.

***Khatt* (arab.)**: Script, calligraphy.

***Kūfi* (arab.):** A general term used to refer to the angular script used in early copies of the *Qur'an*, particularly esteemed until the twelfth century A.D.

***Levha* (Ott. Originating from the Arabic *Lavha*):** A calligraphic panel composed of large-scale letters suitable for framing and hanging on the wall.

***Madrasa* (arab.):** A word applied to institutions of learning, literally 'a place for learning'.

***Muhaqqaq* (arab)**: One of the six main scripts (*aqlām sittah*) particularly favoured between 14th and 16th centuries.

***Muraqqa'* (arab)**: A selection of various paintings and/or calligraphic exemplars bound together mostly in the form of an album.

***Naskh* (arab**): The most common of cursive scripts which was particularly employed for transcribing the *Qur'an* and religious texts.

***Nasta'līq* (pers)**: A curving and sloping script developed in Iran.

***Zerendūd* (pers**): Gold overlaid

APPENDIX I (Chapter Four)

1.4.1 The Chronogram[687] written by court calligrapher Mehmed Rāsim Efendi (d.1755) for the *Thuluth-Muhaqqaq* Album reads;

Tārih-i Murakkaa Nüvişten-i Sultan Ahmed-i Sālis

(Chronogram for the Album Written by Ahmed III)

Cenāb-ı Hazret-i Sultan Ahmed Hān-ı dānā kim

Dakāik fehm-i her fenn ü hünerdir kāmil u ākil

It is his majesty, the most exalted Sultan Ahmed Han

Who has profound knowledge and understanding all arts and science

…

Maarifden ki hüsn-i hat ne rütbe emr-i müşkildir

Ki tahsil etdi bi-ta'lim gayri ol şāh-i dānā-dil

Particularly in the crucial field of the art of calligraphy

Mastered his omniscient majesty with no supervision

---

[687] Mehmed Rasim Efendi, (Author's copy), pp.16-17

…

Bu resme resm eder tārihini Rāsim duā-gūyu

Munakkah bir murakka' yazdı Sultan Ahmed-i Kāmil (1136 A.H.)

Rāsim, praying for his wellbeing, composed the chronogram as follows

Faultless Sultan Ahmed composed an embellished album

1.4.2 The Chronogram[688] written by court calligrapher Suyolcu-zade Mehmed Necīb Efendi (d.1757) for the *Thuluth-Muhaqqaq* Album reads;

Şehin-şâh-ı maârif-pîşe Sultan Ahmed Hân-ı Sâlis

Zaman-ı devr-i adlinde gamı nesh eyledi Mevlâ

His majesty, the omniscient Sultan Ahmed III's

Righteous reign witnesses no sadness with God's command

…

Muhakkak r'aşedâr-ı gıbta eyler dest-i Yâkût'u

Şu Şeyhâne murakka'da olan hüsn-i hat-ı râ'nâ

Even Yaqut's hand would tremble with astonishment

---

[688] Müstakimzāde, (1928), p.438

If he had seen the beautiful calligraphy in this Şeyh-like[689] album

…

Necîbâ bendesi de yazdı bir târih-i müstesnâ

Güzîn hatt-ı hümâyûn-u kilk-i Sultan Ahmed-i dânâ (1136 A.H.)

His slave Necīb composed an exceptional chronogram:

Omniscient Sultan Ahmed's exalted reed pen's calligraphy is distinguished

1.4.3 The Chronogram[690] Poet Nedīm praising the Sultan's calligraphic skills, reads:

Şehinşâhâ sana bir kabiliyet etmiş ihsân Hak

Dilersen Aristûlarla tahr-ı müddeâ eyle

O the king of kings! You are divinely gifted

(If you do not believe me) Discuss this matter if you wish with Aristotle

Bu isti'dād-ı zātī kim vardır senin nihādında

Okut İskender'i evvel elifden ibtidā eyle

Since this personal talent that is there in your nature

---

[689] Inscribed in the style of calligrapher Şeyh Hamdullah (d.1520).
[690] Habib, (1887), p.95 Also See; *Nedim Divānı*, 1951, p.163-165

Teach Alexander but begin from the very begining with the *alif*

Felâtunlar gelüb bûs eylesün dāmān-ı icllāin

Edib arz-ı hüner her birini bî-dest ü pā eyle

Platos shall come and kiss your most bright skirt

Showing your skill, make them give up in despair

Ferīdūn tāc ile fahr eylerse ger bu ālemde

Ana bir peykini gönder de sen zevk ü safā eyle

If in this world *Feridun* is proud with his throne

Send him only one of your running footman, be in joy and pleasure

…

Utārid lāf ururmuş hüsn-ü hatdan āsumān üzre

Kalem al ele anın nāy-i kiklin bīsadā eyle

Mercury is talking about the art of calligraphy above the skies

Take your pen, make his reed pen soundless

Edib azm-i sefer geldi ***murakka'*** *seyrine şimdi*

Dedi çerh ana kim var nūr-i çeşmin rūnümā eyle

Coming back from his journey he came to view the *muraqqa'* now

The fortune said: 'Go, put the bightness of your eye on your face'

O vālā satrlar kim bir nefesde eyledin inşā

Sezādır her birin āvīze-i tāk-ı semā eyle

Those exalted lines which you composed in a second

Each of them deserve to be hang to the vault of the sky

Edib ızhâr anın bir şemse-i cild-i mutallāsın

Felekde mihr ü māhın çeşm-i cānın rūşenā eyle

Showing one, single *shams* motif of its gilded binding,

Illuminate the eyes and hearts of the sun and the moon of this world

Eğer şehzāde Salgur sağ olaydı ana derdim

Bunu seyr eyle de var hāmeni eşkeste pā eyle

If Prince Sungur[691] was alive, I would say to him:

'Look at this (*muraqqa'*), go, snap your pen in two and throw it away…'

Elifler var ki lāyık her biri serv-i sehī-āsā

Dikib bāğ-ı behişte māye-i hüsn ü bahā eyle

There are *alif*s (in this *muraqqa'*) which look like cypruss trees

Take them and grow in the gardens of paradise, as the essence of beauty and value

---

[691] The reference is to the Timurid prince Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh (d.1433), who was a celebrated calligrapher and patron of the arts of the book. (See, Tim Stanley's essay, 'Istanbul and its scribal diaspora' in *The Decorated Word*, particularly p.60)

…

Eğer bir harfini taklīde kaadir var ise gelsin

Gürūh-ı ehl-i hatda cümle hünkārım salā eyle

If there is anyone who can immitate a single letter (from this *muraqqa'*)

Oh my sultan! No such a person in the group of skillful scribes

Cihānın şāhısın hattın da hatlar pādişāhıdır

Edib arz-ı hüner dāim cihānı pür-sadā eyle

You are the sultan of the world, so your calligraphy is the sultan of calligraphies

Showing your skills continiously, let the world be astonished

…

Bu mısra'la Nedīmā bendene hātif dedi tārih:

Bu nāzik hatt-ı Sultān Ahmed'e bak da duā eyle

With this line, this chronogram, composed by a voice from heaven, Oh Nedīm!,

Look at this delicate calligraphy of Sultan Ahmed and pray for him.

The Chronogram[692] for Ahmed III's *Muhaqqaq-thuluth Album* by court poet Seyyid Vehbī Efendi (d.1736) reads;

[692] Habib, (1887), p.94

Mekārim-pīşe Sultan Ahmed-i sahib-maārif kim

Mukarindir ana Tevfīk ü te'yīd-i Hüdā hergāh

Sultan Ahmed who exercises the art of kindness, owner of sciences,

The divine aid and confirmation is always connected to him.

Verilmiş zātına kişver-küşālıkla hünerverlik

Ezelde her kemāle mazhar etmiş hazret-i Allāh

Being the conqueror of conturies and skillful is a gift to him

God has distinguished him in eternity with perfection of all kinds

Hünerde fenn-i hatda kimse tanzīr edemez el'an

Medīh-i pākinin hak edāsın edemez efvāh

Still, nobody can imitate him in skill, in calligraphy

Spices cannot pay the debt of his clean praise

Kemāl izhār edüb bir nev murakka' eyledi tanzīr

Küşād etdi fünūn-u resm-i hat içre nice şehrāh

By displaying a skill, he imitated a new *muraqqa'*

He opened very many roads in the art of calligraphy

Elifler serv-i kadd-i mahbūbe benzer sadı ayn-ı hūr

Safā bulsa aceb midir temāşā eyleyen āgāh

His *alif*s look like the stature of the beloved, his *sad*s are like the eyes of houris

Is it not understandable that the wise watching it shall be delighted

Sezādır tāc-ı dildāre urulsa böyle bir tārih

Dilārā bir murakka' yazdı Sultān Ahmed-i cem-cāh (1136)[693]

Such a chronogram is worthy to be put on the crown of the beloved,

Sultan Ahmed, exalted in station as king Jem, inscribed a beloved album.

[693] Müstakimzade, (1928), p. 78

APPENDIX II (Chapter Five):

2.5.1 - The eulogy in praise of the *Tughra* of Ahmed III composed by Poet Nedīm:

Medhiye-i Tuğrā-i Garrā-i Sultan Ahmed-i Sālis[694]

'The eulogy in praise of the *Tughra* of Ahmed III':

Zihi Pākize tuğrā-i *hümāyūn-i mülūkāne*

Ki vācib mūcibince āmil olmak cümle şāhāne

'What an excellent royal, imperial *Tughra*

So much that all kings are obliged to behave as it requires'

Zihi vālā hümā-i evc-pervāz-ı celālet kim

Düşer bāl açdığınca sāyesi İrān ü Tūrāne

'What an excellent bird of paradise, flying in the skies of majesty

With its wing's shadows following over Iran and Turan'

Zihi simurg-u zerrin pençe-i kaaf-ı mehābet kim

Gelir hemçün piristū heybetinden lerze hakaane

'What an excellent Phoenix with golden paws of the mythical mountain of Qaf of greatness

All the kings shall tremble in front of the grandeur of it's single swallow'

---

[694] *Nedim Divānı*, (1951), p. 133-136

O perçem zülfeler kim dönmüş ânın piş-gāhında

Ser-i Kirsī ham-ı çevgāne düşmüş gūy-i galtāne

Those curved hairs that has become in front of it

The head of Chosroes that fall in to a rolling wheel

Ya ol âli sütunlar kim anın her birisi gūyā

Birer vālā ālemdir leşker-i te'yid-i sübhāne

What about these high columns that all, one by one,

Are exalted flags for the soldiers of the confirmed glories of God

O dilkeş beyzāyı arz etseler tāvus-u kudsiye

Gelirdi sad meserretle etrāfında cevelāne

If one would introduce the charming egg (of the *tughra*) to the exalted peacock

It would come and walk around (the *tughra*) with hundred kinds of joys

O Hānçer şeklini gösterseler sührāb'a başlardı

Aman şevketlu hünkârım deyu feryâād ü efgāne

If one would show the form of the dagger (of the *tughra*) to *Suhrab*

It would start wailing and lamentation, saying: 'Oh my Sultan!'

Değil tuğrā bu bir sāhib-kıran-ı milk ü satvetdir

Ki cāy etmiş miyān bendin iki şemşīr-i bürrāne

This is not a *tughra*, this is 'the lord of a fortune conjunction' of posession and power

That it's place is just between the two sharp swords

Taālallāh ne tavr-ı hūb u şekl-i dilküşādır bu

Ki her bir şivesi hayret verir bakdıkça insāne

May God's name be exalted, what a lovely style and heart tuoching form it has

That, it's every single manner causes amazement to human-beings

Nedir bu resm-i hāsü'l hās kim hiç olmadı manzūr

Nazîri dīde-i müşkil-pesend-i ehl-i irfāne

What is this individual, private picture that has never been seen before

By the eyes of the men of knowledge who are fond of difficulties.

Bu gūne bir hüner arzeylemişdir sultān-ı âli-şān

Cihānda var sanır vār ise gelsin işte meydāne

No exalted sultan has exhibited such a high skill

If one thinks the opposite he shall show himself

Cenāb-ı hazret-i Sultan Ahmed Hān-ı sālis kim

Olur ser-pençe-i hurşīd yâl-i esbine şāne

The most exalted Sultan Ahmed III whose

Horse's mane shall have a comb from the paw of the sun

Şehinşāh-ı cihān-ārâā ki tāc ü tahtı yānında

Serīr-i hüsrev-i taht-ı Ferīdūn köhne efsāne

He is the king of the kings of the universe, even the crown and throne of Feridun
Would be an old fashioned legend compared to his crown and throne

Bu tuğrāsı olaydı İrec'in bāzūsuna ta'viz

Elinden Hançerin Tūr'un alıb atardı yabāne

If this *tughra* was hung on the arm of *Irec*

He would take the dagger of *Tur* and throw it away

Eğer İsfendiyār etmiş olaydı hāk-i pāyin kuhl

Ururdu dest-i red müjgānı tīr-i pūr-u Destāne

Even if Isfandiyar has made the dust of his feet kohl

He would reject the arrows of the stone of *Dastan*

Ser-i rāha ederdi çehresin güsterde çün hurşīd

Duçār olsa Minuçihr ol şehenşāh-ı cihānbāne

On the way along he would show his face like the sun

If Minuchihr was afflicted with the kings of kings of the world

Anın hattına lāyıkdır demek hatt-ı şerīf ancak

Mecāzen derler idi anı evvel hatt-ı şāhāne

It would be relevant to name his work ‘sacred calligraphy’

Metaphorically formerly they used to call it ‘the imperial calligraphy’

Sülüs olmuş müyesser Şeyh’e ancak sonra ammā kim

Anın sülsānın ihsân kıldı Hak sultân-ı zīşāne

The style of thuluth was given as a gift to Sheyh (Hamdallah) but after that

His thuluth for sure was given by God to the exalted Sultan (Ahmed III)

Ki bir āli murakka’ yazdı kim ger bulsa hattātan

Midād-ı müşk-i būyun kuhl derler dīde-i cāne

That he wrote an exalted album (*muraqqa’*) if seen by scribes

The most beautiful manner (of its letters) would be the kohl of their eyes

Anın harf-i ālī-şānına olmaz bahā ancak

Eğer īrād-ı Hind’i katsalar mahsūl-i İrān’e

There is no prise for it’s single, exalted letter

Even if the whole calligraphic works of India were added to that of Iran

Ele aldıkça kilk-i anber-efşān-ı hümāyūnun

Döner ser-safha gūyā nev-behār ermiş gülistāne

When ever he takes his most exalted, diffusing fragrence pen

The surface of the paper becomes a rose-garden meeting the spring

Eğer zerr hall ile çün şem' kikli bir elif çekse

Döner rūh-u Dede üstünde ānın hem-çü pervāne

If the sun drew an *alif* with golden ink

The soul of Dede (Mustafa Dede d.1538) would fly over it like a moth

O şehdir kim cihānın şehleri bāb-ı refi'inde

Ederler çün gedā arz-ı niyāz ü acz der-bāne

He is the king, in front of whose exalted gate

Kings, like slaves, present their supplication and destitude

Eğer kim mūcib-i fermānı ile āmil olmazsa

Ferīdūn ise de tahtından eyler çerh bīgāne

If one does not obey the commands of his *firman*

Even if Feridun does it, fortune will tak ehim down of his throne

Murādı hükm-i şer'-i Ahmed'i tatbīka sāidir

Pes anın ittibāı farzdır hep ehl-i īmāne

His will is applying the holy law of Ahmad (Prophet Muhammad)

Thus obeying his rules in a must for all believers

Cenāb-ı Hakk'a sıdk-ı kalbinin āsārıdır ancak

Ki kahretmektedir a'dāyı seyf-i kahramānāne

It is only the loyalty of his heart to the most exalted God

That he is the one who ruins the enemy like the sword of *Kahraman*

Çekib tiyg-i cihādı hamdülillāh kıldı efkende

Adūnun tenlerin hāk-i siyāha, serlerin kaane

The sword of holy war in his hand, thank God, he dropped

The bodies of the enemy to earth and their heads to blood

Edib islāmiyān mülkünde adl āyinini icrā

Yeniden verdi revnak hānedân-ı āl-i Osmāne

Performing the ritual of justice in the lands of Islam

He gave brightness to the Ottoman dynasty, again

Sitanbul'u kılub envā-ı şehrāyin ile tezyīn

Meserretler ile döndürdü her sükūn gülistāne

He illuminated İstanbul with various festivals

He changed the whole city into a rose-garden

Eder İrān-zemīni tā hudūd-u Belh'a dek teshīr

Eğer bir kere ruhsat verse tıyg-i tīz-i uryāne

The whole country of Iran until the encounters of Balkh

Would be fascinated if he would let his sword come out of it's scabbard

Alıb İrān-zemīni kabza-i teshīrine hālā

Ferīdūn gibi oldu şehriyār İrān ü Tūrān'e

Taking the whole lands of Iran with the fascinating handle of his sword

He became the sultan of Iran and Turan like Feridun

…

Olub nām ü şerīfiyle müzeyyen sikke vü hutbe

Vere tuğrāsı ārāyiş berāt-ı izzet ü şāne

The coin and the *khutba* (the friday oration) being adorned with his most exalted name

May his *tughra* give embellishment to the *firman* of glory and greatness

2.5.2 - The eulogy in praise of the *Tughra* of Ahmed III, composed by Arpaeminizāde Mustafa Sāmī (d.1732) reads:

The eulogy in praise of the *Tughra* of Ahmed III, by Poet Sāmī Efendi

Der Medh-i Tuğrā-i Garrā-i Hazret-i Pādişāh-ı Cihān[695]

(The Eulogy in Praise of the *Tughra* of the Exalted Sultan of the Universe)

Ne dem surh ile olsa revnak-ārā-i nişān tuğrā

Döner tūtī-i āle k'ola zerrīn āşiyān tuğrā

When the *tughra* becomes the sign of splendor with red ink,

It looks like a red parrot that has a golden cage.

---

[695] *Diwān-i Sāmī* , (1253AH/1837AD), pp. 85-86

Anın merbūt-u tār-ı zülfesidir halka-i devlet

Ruh-i ikbāle oldu turra-i anber-feşān tuğrā

The ring of generosity is linked to it's hair

The nice-smelling hair-like *tughra* adorned the face of prosperity

Olur ahkāmı cāri dāimā mevc-i sütūr üzre

Küşāde eyleyüb keştī-i adle bādbān tuğrā

Its commands are always current on the waves of lines,

The *tughra* opening the sail of the sailboat of justice.

Elifler i'tidāl ü istikametden ibāretdir

Verir zülfüyle zincir-i adāletden nişān tuğrā

The *Alif*s are only rightousness and moderation,

The *Tughra* with its *zulfe* (three horizontal lines) gives sign from chain of justice

Hayır-hāhān-ı dīne açmada āgūş-i ta'zīmin

Olubdur Hançer ile düşmene Hançer-keşān tuğrā

Opens its arms of honouring wide to the well-wishers of religion

Where as, *tughra* threatens enemies with a drawn dagger

Eder şīr olsa da hasmı sad merhale yerden

Alub ser-pençe-i perzūruna tīr ü kemān tuğrā

Even if it's enemy is a lion, hundred times higher from the ground,

The *tughra* would take it in it's paw…

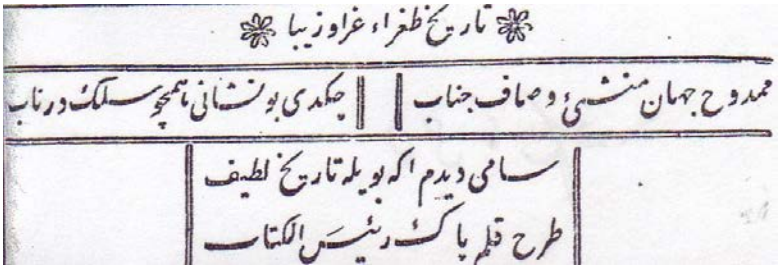
Mezheb-i nakş-i zībā-yı musanna'la olur gūyā

Zemīn-i safhada hem-reng-i tāvūs-u cenān tuğrā

In the order of artistically fashioned ornament, as if

The *Tughra* would be on the ground of phrase, in the colour of a heavenly peacock

2.5.3 - The Chronogram composed by Poet Arpaeminizade Mustafa Sāmī Efendi for the *Tughra* of Ahmed III



The Chronogram for the *Tughra* of Ahmed III, by Poet Sāmī

Tārih-i Tuğrā-i Garrā-i Zībā[696]

Chronogram for the Illustrious Brilliant *Tughra*

Memdūh-u cihān münşī-i vassāf-ı cenāb

Çekdi bu nişānı hemçü silk-i dürr-nāb

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[696] *Dīwān-i Sāmī* , (1253AH/1837AD), p.32

The wordly-praised word-painter author of his majesty

Drew this sign like series of shining white pearls

Sāmī dedim ana böyle tārih-i latīf

Tarh-ı kalem-i pāk-i reis-ül küttāb

Oh Sāmī! I composed such a pleasant chronogram for it

The work of the pure pen of *reis-ül küttab* (minister of foreign affairs)

2.5.4 – The Chronogram composed by Poet Seyyid Vehbī Efendi for the *Tughra* of Ahmed III

Kasīde-i Garrā Der Sitāyiş-i Sultan Ahmed Be Evsāf-i Tuğrā-i Hümāyūn

Ode in praise of the qualities of the exalted *Tughra* of Sultan Ahmed III

Hümādır gūyā gelmiş per açmış zer kafes üzre

Firāz-i kürsī-i hattında resm-i nām-ı sultānī

It is the bird of paradise, wings wide open over a golden cage

On its seat of honor is calligraphed the Sultan's name

Anun her elf-i memdūdu sütūn-i kah-i devletdür

Ki anlarla olur dinün de ümrān çarkani

Its every single elongated *elif* is a pillar of the state

Over which stands the bases of religion as well

...

Ne tuğra ü *çi direk-i keşti* *etdür*

Sütūnlarla mulahik zülfeler ālāt-i bīcānı

The *tughra* is a three masted ship sailing in the sea of state

...

Kalem her harfine bin nükte-i ser-beste derc itse

Bulunmaz hüsn-i hattınun tahrīr imkānı

Even if the pen composed a thousand phrases in praise of every single letter

The qualities of your calligraphy could not be listed in full

APPENDIX III (Chapter Six)

3.6.1-

Ali Emiri Efendi's poem[697], praising Ahmed III's couplet signature, reads:

Ü çündü hazret Ahmed Hān-ı Cem-pāye

Ubūdiyet edüb izhār ey kevneyne pirāye

Kelām-ı akdesin resm eylese tuğrā-yi garrāye

Bu vālā beyti de tahrir kılmış zir-i tuğrāye

Şefi'ü'l-müznibīnsin ey şeh-i iklīm-i mā edhā

Hadīs-i pākini sultān Ahmed eylemiş tuğrā

The most exalted sultan, Ahmed III, exalted in station as King Jem

Respectfully ready to serve the lord of the two worlds

Has composed (Oh Muhammad!) your most exalted words in the form of a illustrious *tughra*

And has penned this supreme couplet under the *tughra*

You are the intercessor for sinners on the day of judgment. You.. The king of the climate of highness.. Sultan Ahmed has transformed your pure hadith into a *tughra*.

...

O sultān-ı cihān el-hak mahāret āşikār etmiş

Hutūt erbābı hayretle tasvīr-i cidār etmiş

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[697] *Dīwān*, Millet Manuscript Library, Ali Emīrī Section, Manzum, No 529, pp. 76-80

Cihāna levha-i garra-i yektā yādigār etmiş

Bu şāhāne kelām-ı pāki anda derkenār etmiş

Şefi'ü'l-müznibīnsin ey şeh-i iklīm-i mā edhā

Hadīs-i pākini sultān Ahmed eylemiş tuğrā

The sultan of the universe has indeed shown his giftedness

The masters of calligraphy have all been astonished by his work

He has left a unique and supreme panel behind as a souvenir to the world

And has noted down these kingly words to the edge of this work

You are the intercessor for sinners on the day of judgment. You... The king of the climate of highness.. Sultan Ahmed has transformed your pure hadith into a *tughra*.

Mülūkī nüshadır ta'zīm ile ey dil ziyāret kıl

Yazılmış bak ne san'atlı medād zerle dikkat kıl

Hadīsin aşkına ey fahr-i ālem lütf ü şefkat kıl

Bu abd-i nātüvāne hem o sultāne şefāat kıl

Şefi'ü'l-müznibīnsin ey şeh-i iklīm-i mā edhā

Hadīs-i pākini sultān Ahmed eylemiş tuğrā

Oh my heart! Do exalt and visit this kingly work

Pay attention to the gold that it has been written in

You[698]... The pride of the universe, have mercy, for the sake of your hadith

Do have mercy to this poor slave of yours and the sultan

You are the intercessor for sinners on the day of judgment. You.. The king of the climate of highness.. Sultan Ahmed has transformed your pure hadith into a *Tughra*.

Bu levha rūhunu şad eylemişdir Şeyh u Yākūt'un

Yanında kıymeti kemter kalur elmas ü yākūtun

Gelüb sürsün yüzün ta'zim ile sükkān-i nāsūtun

Ziyāret eylesün kerrūbiyānı milk-i nāsūtun

Şefi'ü'l-müznibīnsin ey şeh-i iklīm-i mā edhā

Hadīs-i pākini sultān Ahmed eylemiş tuğrā

This is the panel which rejoiced the souls of Şeyh [699] and Yaqut[700]

In comparison, diamond and ruby would be of less value

The residents of the land of humanity shall come and rub their face to it

The most exalted angels of the heavens shall visit it

You are the intercessor for sinners on the day of judgment. You.. The king of the climate of highness.. Sultan Ahmed has transformed your pure hadith into a *tughra*.

---

[698] Prophet Muhammad is addressed.
[699] Sheikh Hamdullah (d.1526). He was the court calligrapher of the Ottoman ruler Sultan Bayazid II (r.1481-1512). This line referring to both Şeyh Hamdullah and Yaqut al-Musta'simī via Sultan Ahmed III's art is a notable aspect of this poem.
[700] Yaqut al-Musta'simī (d.1298). He was the court calligrapher of Al-Musta'sim Billāh, the last Abbasid caliph.

3.6.2 -Ali Emiri Efendi's second poem[701], in praise of Ahmed III's couplet signature, reads;

'Oldu peydā māden-i hikmetde yektā bir güher

Hāsılātın bir yerde cem' eyledi ya bahr u berr

Ya zuhūra geldi bu şeh-levha-i kudsī hüner

Hatt-ı Sultan Ahmed'e hayrān olur cinn u beşer

Oldu işbū mısra' na't-i celīl u mu'teber

Kilk-i sultān Ahmed ibn-i Hān Mehmed'den eser

A unique jewel appeared in the mine of wisdom

As if the sea and land gathered their fruits in one

Since this panel of exalted talent came into being

Human-beings and djinns admire the calligraphy of sultan Ahmed

This line became an exalted and mighty eulogy

The work of the pen of Sultan Ahmed, son of Khan Mehmed

Hazret-i sultān Ahmed o sultān-i velī

Etdi istinsāh beş def'a kelām-i mubzili

Her kelamında olur bir sırr-ı a'zam müncelī

Bak nasıl ālī yazar na't-i nebī-i mürseli

---

[701] *Dīwān*, Millet Manuscript Library, Ali Emīrī Section, Manzum, No 529, pp. 98-101

Oldu işbū mısra' na't-i celīl u mu'teber

Kilk-i sultān Ahmed ibn-i Hān Mehmed'den eser

Sultan Ahmed the most exalted, the saint sultan

Copied five times the word of God

In which from every word shines a great secret

Look, how sublimely the eulogy of the prophet has been written

This line became an exalted and mighty eulogy

The work of the reed pen of Sultan Ahmed, son of Khan Mehmed

G *ördünmi levhasın ol pādişah*

Hattı ālidir o sultān-i gazanfer peykerin

Kıl temāşā nakşını bu levhada peygamberin

Āferin-hāndır ana cibrīli arş-i ekberin

Oldu işbū mısra' na't-i celīl u mu'teber

Kilk-i sultān Ahmed ibn-i Hān Mehmed'den eser

Did we not see the panel of the most well-known sultan

The calligraphy of that most brave sultan is most sublime[702]

Watch the most pious design of the prophet in this panel

Gabriel, in heavens, celebrates it's 'finesse'

---

[702] The word 'gazanfer' in the poem, which is translated as 'most brave' also means 'lion' and therefore naturally refers to the Caliph Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet.

This line became an exalted and mighty eulogy

The work of the reed pen of Sultan Ahmed, son of Khan Mehmed

Hānedān-i āl-i Osmān'in g *ören irfānını*

Anmayın sāir selātinin ulüvv ü şānını

Anlayın bu dūdmān-ı a'zamın rü *ç*ānını

G *öst*r *her ferdinin āsārı bin bürhānını*

Oldu işbū mısra' na't-i celīl u mu'teber

Kilk-i sultān Ahmed ibn-i Hān Mehmed'den eser

You, the ones who have seen the spiritual knowledge of the Ottomans

Do not mention the highness and greatness of the other sultans

Appreciate the advantage of this most exalted household[703]

The works of its every single member display a thousand evidences

This line became an exalted and mighty eulogy

The work of the reed pen of Sultan Ahmed, son of Khan Mehmed

İşbū garrā levha-i pāki ziyāret eyledim

Hattını ta'zim ile telsīm-i ru'yet eyledim

Rūhuna hattātının ihdā-i rahmet eyledim

Anda bu şāhāne güftārı kırāat eyledim

---

[703] The word *dudman* in the poem, which is translated as 'household' here, has a *Bektaşi* connection in terms of the expression '*dudman-i Bektaşiye'*.

Oldu işbū mısra' na't-i celīl u mu'teber

Kilk-i sultān Ahmed ibn-i Hān Mehmed'den eser

I visited this pure, illustrious panel

Praising its calligraphy, I kissed it's image

I presented compassion to the soul of its calligrapher

There, I recited these wonderful words:

This line became an exalted and mighty eulogy

The work of the reed pen of Sultan Ahmed, son of Khan Mehmed

Vasf-ı peygamberdeki nazm-ı ciHānpīrāya bak

Bir şeh-i yektā bunu resm eylemiş tuğrāya bak

Āl-i Osmān devletinde kudret-i ulyāya bak

Hüsn-i hatt-ı bīnazīr-i kāināt-ārāya bak

Oldu işbū mısra' na't-i celīl u mu'teber

Kilk-i sultān Ahmed ibn-i Hān Mehmed'den eser

Look at this world-esteemed poem in praise of the prophet

Look at the *Tughra*, which has been designed by a matchless king

Look at the most exalted power of the state of the Ottomans

Look at this matchless calligraphy illuminating the universe

This line became an exalted and mighty eulogy

The work of the reed pen of Sultan Ahmed, son of Khan Mehmed

Sanki her bir noktası bir nāzeninin hālidir

Her münevver harfi bir nakş-i ezel timsālidir

A'zamiyet 'aynıdır ya akdesiyet dālidir

Bir muazzam pādişahın hatt-ı alü'l-ālidir

Oldu işbū mısra' na't-i celīl u mu'teber

Kilk-i sultān Ahmed ibn-i Hān Mehmed'den eser

It is as if every single dot in it, is a beauty-spot of a beloved

Its every single illuminated letter is a model of decoration of time without beginning

Maximum value is its *ayn*[704], maximum holiness is its *dal*[705]

It is a most exalted calligraphic work of a great sultan

This line became an exalted and mighty eulogy

The work of the reed pen of Sultan Ahmed, son of Khan Mehmed

Ra'şe tutsun rūh-u Yākūt'u bu vālā levhadan

Cevheri gelsün de meşk alsın bu yektā levhadan

Ibn-i Bevvāb'e hicāb ersün bu a'lā levhadan

Ibn-i Mukle hibre-çesm olsun bu garrā levhadan

Oldu işbū mısra' na't-i celīl u mu'teber

Kilk-i sultān Ahmed ibn-i Hān Mehmed'den eser

---

[704] *Ayn* is the 18th letter of the Arabic Alphabet.
[705] *Dal* is the 8th letter of the Arabic Alphabet.

May Yakut's[706] soul tremble with this supreme panel

May Cevheri come and practise calligraphy from this unique panel

May Ibn Bawwab[707] be embarrassed with this exalted panel

May Ibn Muqla[708] get experienced from this illustrious panel

This line became an exalted and mighty eulogy

The work of the reed pen of Sultan Ahmed, son of Khan Mehmed

Hatt-ı pākin ol kadar mersūs u mersūh eyledi

Ş öhret-i hattātānı memsūh eyledi

I'tibār-ı levha-i eslāfi mefsūh eyledi

Hatt-ı meşhūr-i Mübārek Şah'i mensūh eyledi

Oldu işbū mısra' na't-i celīl u mu'teber

Kilk-i sultān Ahmed ibn-i Hān Mehmed'den eser

He made his pure calligraphy strong and solid

He diminished the fame of the greatest calligraphers

He cancelled the credit of the works of his predecessors

He abolished Mubarek Shah's[709] famous calligraphic works

---

[706] Here, Yakut refers to Yakut al-Mustasimi (d.1298), the chief-calligrapher in the court of the last Abbasid caliph al-Musta'sim.
[707] Ibn Bawwab (d.1031), also known as Ali b. Hilal, the designer of the calligraphic styles of *rayhani* and *muhaqqaq*.
[708] Ibn Muqla (d.940), famous Abbasid vizier-calligrapher who served Caliph Qahir and Caliph Radhi.
[709] Mubarek Shah (d.1311), also known as Mubarek Shah Kuds, celebrated for his *naskh* works.

This line became an exalted and mighty eulogy

The work of the reed pen of Sultan Ahmed, son of Khan Mehmed

Sanki koymuşdur hurūfu dürr u gevher şekline

Ey Emīrī belki bir rūh-u musavver şekline

Reng-i hubru benzemiş müşk-i muattar şekline

Vermiş imdad-i ilāhī ziyb u zīver şekline

Oldu işbū mısra' na't-i celīl u mu'teber

Kilk-i sultān Ahmed ibn-i Hān Mehmed'den eser'[710]

As if letters were tranformed into jewels by him

Oh Emīrī! As if, into a illustrated spirit

Its colour was transformed into perfumed musk

Divine grace has given ornament and embellishment to its form

This line became an exalted and mighty eulogy

The work of the reed pen of Sultan Ahmed, son of Khan Mehmed

[710] *Dīwān*, (Millet Manuscript Library, Ali Emīrī Section, Manzum, No 529), pp. 98-101

CATALOGUE OF AHMED III'S CALLIGRAPHIC WORKS

CALLIGRAPHIC PANELS

1- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Ḥasbī Allāhu wa Ni'm al-Wakī l

Size: 65x40cm.

Location: TIEM, Inv. No.2714

Literature: Çağman, Filiz & Şule Aksoy, (1998), p.34

2- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed b. Mehemmed Khān

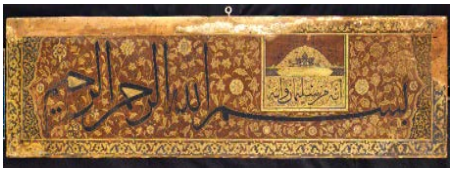
Date: Undated

Text: Fa-Allāhu Khayrun Ḥāfiẓ ān wa Huwa Arḥ am al-Rāḥ imī n

Size: 60x245cm.

Location: TSM-HA8/322.

Literature: Abu Dhabi, (2009), p.87.

3- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Mashshaqahu Ahmed

Date: Undated

Text: Bism-Allāh al-Raḥ mān al-Raḥ ī m

Size: 93x26cm.

Location: TIEM, Inv. No.2768

Literature: Unpublished

4- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed b. Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Bism-Allāh al-Raḥ mān al-Raḥ ī m

Size: 130x41cm.

Location: TIEM, Inv. No.2721

Literature: Unpublished

5- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed b. Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Bism-Allāh al-Raḥ mān al-Raḥ ī m

Size: 165x71cm.

Location: TIEM, 2799

Literature: Unpublished

6- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: The *Tevhīd* Formula

Size: 39x94cm.

Location: The Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, The Topkapı Palace Museum, İstanbul, Inv. No.21/220.

Literature: Aydın, (2004), pp.238,239.

7- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: 1115AH/1703AD

Text: The *Tevhīd* Formula

Size:67x29cm.

Location: TIEM, Inv. No. 2725

Literature: Unpublished.

8- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

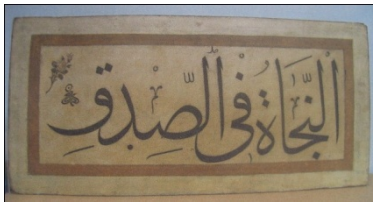
Date: Undated

Text: The *Tevhīd* Formula

Size: 176x48cm

Location: The Chancery Hall, The Topkapı Palace Museum, İstanbul

Literature: Unpublished

9- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Al-Najāt fi al-Ṣ idq

Size: 95x45cm.

Location: TVHSM, Inv. No.2125

Literature: *Miras-Heritage*, (2010), p.99

10- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: F'allama innahu Lā ilāha illa Allāh

Size: 42x71cm.

Location: The Mausoleum of Şeyh Mustafa Devātī, Üsküdar, İstanbul.

Literature: Unpublished

11- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Katabahu Ahmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Bism-Allāh al-Raḥ mān al-Raḥ ī m

Size: 97x66cm.

Location: TIEM, Inv. No. 2724

Literature: Alparslan, (1999), p.111

12- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Muḥ ammad al-Hādī

Size: 42x65cm.

Location: Nadir Collection, London

Literature: Geneve (1988), p.149.

13- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed b. Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Fatabārak Allāhu Aḥ san al-Khāliqī n

Size: 46x61cm

Location: TSM, Inv. No.06-31655

Literature: Unpublished

14- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed b. Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Adda Farāiḍ Allāhu Takun Muṭ ī ’an

Size: 258x76cm.

Location: TIEM, Inv. No.2800

Literature: Unpublished

15- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed b. Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Adda Farāiḍ Allāhu Takun Muṭ ī ’an

Size: 258x76cm.

Location: The Şehzāde Mosque, İstanbul

Literature: Unpublished

16- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Al-Jannatu Taḥ t al-Aqdām al-Ummahāt

Size: 241x85cm

Location: TVHSM, Inv. No.2125

Literature: Unpublished

17- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed b. Mehemmed Khān

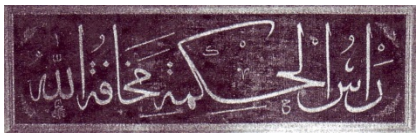
Date: 1136AH/1723AD

Text: Al-Jannatu Taḥ t al-Aqdām al-Ummahāt

Size: 232x73cm.

Location: The Mosque of Emetullah Vālide, Üsküdar, İstanbul

Literature: Unpublished

18- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed b. Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Ra's al-Ḥikmat Makhāfat-Allāh

Size: 214x67cm.

Location: TVHSM, Inv. No. 23-5

Literature: Unpublished

19- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Ra’s al-Ḥikmat Makhāfat-Allāh

Size: 235x81cm.

Location: The Mosque of Emetullah Vālide, Üsküdar, İstanbul

Literature: Unpublished

20- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: *Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān*

Date: Undated

Text: *Ra’s al-Ḥikmat Makhāfat-Allāh*

Size: 182x64cm.

Location: The Ayasofya Mosque, İstanbul

Literature: Unpublished

21- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Unsigned

Date: Undated

Text: Turkish Quatrain

Size: 285x42cm.

Location: The Library of Ahmed III, Topkapı Palace Museum.

Literature: Unpublished

22- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: *Az'afü'l-'ibād Ahmed Āl-i Osmān*

Date: Undated

Text: *Innahu Samī' al-du'ā*

Size: 56x42cm.

Location: Private Collection, Istanbul.

Literature: Unpublished

23- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Aḥ med bin Meḥ emmed Khān al-Muẓ affar Dāiman

Size: 64x88cm.

Location: The Chancery Hall, Topkapı Palace Museum, İstanbul

Literature: Unpublished

24- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Aḥ med bin Meḥ emmed Khān al-Muẓ affar Dāiman

Size: 67x86cm.

Location: The Chancery Hall, Topkapı Palace Museum, İstanbul

Literature: Unpublished

25- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Couplet in Turkish

Date: Undated

Text: Aḥ med bin Meḥ emmed Khān al-Muẓ affar Dāiman

Size: 46x31cm.

Location: The Collection of Neslişah Osmanoğlu, İstanbul

Literature: Unpublished

ALBUMS

26- The *Muhaqqaq-Thuluth* Album

Calligraphic Style: *Muhaqqaq* and *Thuluth*

Signature: *Ahmed Hān*

Date: 1136/1723

Text: The *Basmala* and *Hadith*s

Size: 31x59cm.

Location: TSM.A.3652

Literature: Duran, (2008), pp.157-161

Fol.1

Fol.3

Fol.5

Fol.6

Fol.7

Fol.9

Fol.11

Fol.13

Fol.15

27- The Imperial *Tughra* Album (*Murakka-ı Has*)

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khan

Date: 1140/1727

Text: An Arabic couplet in praise of Prophet Muhammed and Turkish Couplets

Size: 34x61cm.

Location: TSMK.A.3653

Literature: The Album: Derman, (2009), pp.8-20. Fol.3: Derman, (1998), p.86. Fol.4: Rado, (1980), p.201. Fol.5: İstanbul 1983, p.291.

 Fol.1

 Fol.2

 Fol.3


Fol.4


Fol.5


Fol.6


Fol.7


Fol.8

 Fol.9

 Fol.10

28- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Couplet Signature in Turkish

Date: Undated

Text: Shafā‘atī li-ahl al-kabāiri min Ummatī

Size: 44x68cm.

Location: TSMK, No.A.812

Literature: Unpublished

29- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Couplet in Turkish

Date: 1123AH/1710AD

Text: Shafā‘atī li-ahl al-kabāiri min Ummatī

Size: 34x52cm.

Location: TSMK, A.425

Literature: Aktepe, (1989), p.37. Ülker, (1987), p.207.

30- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Ḥasbī Allāhu wa Ni’m al-Wakī l

Size: 26x59cm

Location: TSMK, Inv. No.H.2280/12

Literature: Çağman, Filiz - Şule Aksoy, 1998, p.87. Derman, (1998), p.83

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS

31- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Turkish Couplet

Size: 67x91cm.

Location: The Entrance of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, Topkapı Palace Museum, İstanbul

Literature: Derman, 2009, p.8

32- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Turkish Couplet

Size: 66x92cm.

Location: The Entrance of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, Topkapı Palace Museum, İstanbul

Literature: Derman, 2009, p.8

33- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Namakahu Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: 1138AH/1725AD

Text: The *Tevhīd* Formula

Size: 234x54cm.

Location: The Entrance of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet, The Topkapı Palace Museum, İstanbul.

Literature: Derman, 2009, p.5

34- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: 1136AH/1723AD

Text: Bism-Allāh al-Raḥ mān al-Raḥ ī m

Size: 169x71cm.

Location: Above the Gate Leading to the Hall of Petitions, The Topkapı Palace Museum, İstanbul.

Literature: Unpublished

35- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Ra’s al-Ḥikmat Makhāfat-Allāh

Size: 232x64cm.

Location: Above the Gate Leading to the Third Courtyard, The Topkapı Palace, İstanbul

Literature: Unpublished

36- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: 1141AH/1728AD

Text: Turkish Couplet

Size: 54x342cm.

Location: The Public Fountain in front of the Main Gate of the Topkapı Palace Museum, İstanbul

Literature: Alparslan, (1999), p.110

37- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Turkish Couplet

Size: 62x341cm.

Location: The Emetullah Vālide Fountain in Üsküdar, İstanbul.

Literature: Unpublished

38- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Bism-Allāh al-Raḥ mān al-Raḥ ī m

Size: 47x144cm.

Location: Collection of Epigraphic Inscriptions in the Second Courtyard, The Topkapı Palace Museum, İstanbul

Literature: Unpublished

39- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Ra’s al-Ḥikmat Makhāfat-Allāh

Size: 43x136cm.

Location: Collection of Epigraphic Inscriptions in the Second Courtyard, The Topkapı Palace Museum, İstanbul

Literature: Unpublished

40- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Ahmed bin Mehemmed Khān

Date: Undated

Text: Turkish Couplet

Size: 54x113cm.

Location: Collection of Epigraphic Inscriptions in the Second Courtyard, The Topkapı Palace Museum, İstanbul

Literature: Unpublished

CALLIGRAPHIC COMPOSITIONS APPLIED ON TILES

41- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Unsigned

Date: Undated

Text: Shafā'atī li-ahl al-Kabāri min Ummatī

Size: 24x38cm.

Location: Nevşehir Museum, Inv. No.

Literature: Naza-Dönmez, 1996, p.111

42- 

Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Unsigned

Date: Undated

Text: Shafā'atī li-ahl al-Kabāri min Ummatī

Size: 36x52cm.

Location: The Ağalar Mosque, Harem Complex, Topkapı Palace Museum, İstanbul.

Literature: Unpublished

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Calligraphic Style: *Jalī Thuluth*

Signature: Unsigned

Date: Undated

Text: Allah, Muhammad, Abu-Bakr, Uthmān, 'Umār, 'Ali

Size: 18x25cm.

Location: The Mosque of Dāmād İbrahim Paşa, Nevşehir.

Literature: Unpublished

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[711] This manuscript consists of six parts:
a)1a-27a: Zeyneddîn Abdurrahman İbn Yûsuf, *Tuhfetu Ulil Elbâb*.
b)27b-42a: Hakkakzâde Mustafa Hilmî, *Mîzân-ül Hatt ala Vaz'ı Üstâd-üs Selef*.
c)42b-56a: Hendeset-ül Hatt.
d)56a-92b: Nefeszâde İbrahim, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*.
e)93a-99a: Imam Suyûtî's opinions about calligraphy.
f)99b-119: Hâzâ Silsile-i Hattâtîn.

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